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JULY, 1912

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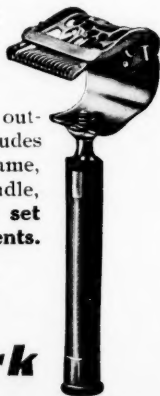
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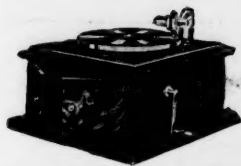


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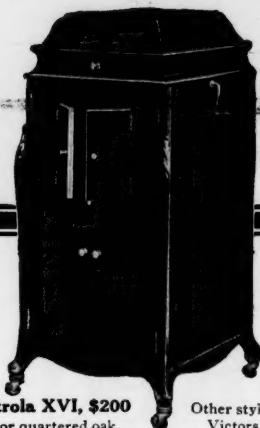
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Vol. XV

# SMITH'S MAGAZINE

No. 4

A PUBLICATION FOR THE HOME

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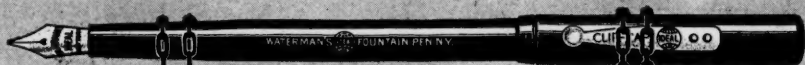
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# SMITH'S MAGAZINE

VOLUME 15

JULY, 1912

NUMBER 4

## The Joy Bringer

By Grace MacGowan Cooke

Author of "The Power and the Glory," "Huldah," "The Return," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBT. A. GRAEF

### CHAPTER I.

IT had rained, but for the moment the night was only intensely dark, drenched leaves now and again sending down a shower upon the gravelled walk. The girl on the little side porch listened anxiously. She settled her long, gray raincoat about her, and glanced over her shoulder at the silent house. There was a sound of wheels. Somebody leaped from a vehicle at the walk outside, swung the gate wide, and came tramping up the path toward where she waited. She caught her breath. The eagerness of the approach, the boldness of it, shook her heart, moved her to a sort of surprise, when she associated that looming, rapidly moving figure with Julius.

There was no time for real thought. The newcomer paused at the porch edge. He evidently made out her presence; and there burst from him, with the impetuosity of a sob, the one word:

"Love!"

The tone was guarded, scarcely above a whisper. It was the signal or password she had expected; yet somehow it seemed a new declaration, a challenge from some obscure fate.

Before Cliffe knew what it was she would have done, she had leaned down, and responded with the same word, adding:

"Be careful. Nobody's gone to bed yet."

For answer, his arms shot out. He caught her to him with a strange, murmured, inarticulate cry of rapture and adoration. A moment—in surprise that was almost dismay—she struggled faintly in his embrace. Then she resigned herself, her two hands went up to clasp about his neck, his face was bent to hers, and, with his heart plunging against her own, she felt that she was being carried in the dark toward the gate.

It all seemed so mad, so unlike the Julius Crittenden that she had known, a discriminating playfellow in the modern pastime of flirtation, that she half questioned as to who this viking wooer was. Something potent and tremendously primal seemed to communicate itself to her from his touch. A penetrating warmth ran through all her veins. She was half afraid of him, and wholly frightened at her own emotions.

They passed the gate. He cradled her in his arms as easily as though she had been a child, stopped at the side of a buggy, and lifted her to its seat. She came to herself then with a sort of start, and a knowledge of black, wet boughs tossing against the blackish-gray blur of night sky, and the horse, a blot of shadow, turning its head and moving, impatient to be off. The man gathered up the lines from somewhere, and sprang in beside her.

"Are you driving Firefly?" she whispered.

It was the first word that had been spoken between them since that thrilling "Love" of his, and her reply. He made no answer. The powerful arm went around her again. His lips sought hers.

"Jule"—she avoided the kiss—"Jule, did you leave Firefly untied when you came in?" She strove to set a quieter note.

"Yes," whispered the man. "What's the matter, sweetheart? Why do you push me away?"

"You aren't paying any attention to your driving, Jule," the girl fenced. "You can't handle Firefly that way. I thought you didn't consider her safe to drive at all. I thought you were going to sell her to your brother. Do be careful. It would be so absurd to have a spill when one was eloping."

She spoke lightly to cover the perturbation that was in her. The man beside her laughed, a deep sound, far down in his throat, and, holding her close, put a cheek against her wet hair, where he swept hood and veil back from it. He was murmuring something that was not words. Firefly kept the center of the road with precision, and sped along at a pace that answered her driver's eagerness.

The rain still held off; but the low-hung clouds from which it had descended blotted out moon and stars, and made a moist darkness of the earth. The mare cut a corner sharply, only half guided by Crittenden's one hand. The fingers of that hand were against her cheek, striving to push her face around toward his.

"Jule—Jule," remonstrated the girl. "This isn't Pine Street. Don't you see?"

"My eyes were shut," murmured the big voice, with a tremble of laughter in it.

"Well, you can't drive Firefly with your eyes shut!" in a sort of exasperation—this was a strange Julius. "Aren't we going to your uncle's?" she demanded suddenly.

"No," he answered, almost inaudibly. "Kiss me, Cliffe. What makes you keep your face turned away all the time? I thought I wouldn't bother Uncle Heath

about it. I spoke to the Methodist parson."

"But," the girl protested, in amazement; "but, Julius, you know you promised me that your uncle should marry us. It made it seem more regular, somehow."

"Did I?" whispered the bridegroom. "Well, I—I must have forgotten afterward; and now it's too late to change. What's the difference? We'll be married, just the same. That's all that counts."

The words came to Cliffe with a shock. They seemed to set a chasm between her and this man she was about to wed. The manner of the thing did not matter to him; he was even unaware that it mattered so largely to a woman. And Julius was the one man she would have said who unfailingly got the feminine point of view. Indeed, it was often his. What had changed him? Was this marriage? She thought to have remonstrated. It seemed to her that she should object at once, tell him that if his uncle, the rector of St. Paul's, her own pastor, had failed at the last moment to agree to their plans, she must be taken back to Miss Lassiter's; but somehow she found her head drooping until it rested on a broad shoulder, her will resigned to that of another, momentarily glad that if the rector had raised objections, her lover had been man enough to find some one willing to perform the ceremony, that he was able to guide the fiery, little mare through the dark night at so swift a pace, giving only a negligent hand to her driving, while the other lay beneath his fiancée's cheek, a warm, human reminder that she was loved, adored—mastered, as his difficulties had been.

Lights were flitting distractedly in the little, frame parsonage when they drew up at the gate. The sound of wheels seemed a sufficient announcement of their coming. The door opened, and, in a great blur of yellow light, there appeared a small man wearing his hat, and carrying a book in his hand. After him came a woman with a lamp. They had some difficulty in getting an umbrella raised in the porch.



"You'll have to have it, Stephen—you'll have to have it," sounded the woman's immature, girlish tones. "You'll break the lamp chimney if you don't."

Without reply, the little parson started out in the wet, windy dark, his wife following, carrying both umbrella and lamp. As they reached the buggy this combination proved unlucky. So soon as the column of hot air from the flame had dried the surface of its shelter, it began slowly to burn a hole in the fabric. In after years, the smell of smoldering cloth used to bring the scene back to Clifford, and with it the parson's fretful:

"Now, look what you've done. Why can't you hold the lamp lower or the umbrella higher?"

Through it all was the feeling of the man beside her, of the arm that circled and drew her strongly toward him, not delaying for her consent, presuming that her longing to be caressed waited on his eagerness to bestow caresses. His face was persistently in shadow. He responded in a murmur, so that when, the umbrella being finally raised to a safe height, the preacher opened his book, and seemed about to begin the service, and Crittenden spoke out in something like his full voice, Clifford had a shock of surprise at the depth and weightiness of his utterance.

"You'll have to get another witness," he admonished the pastor.

"I—ah—yes, that's so," the preacher agreed. He turned to his wife. "Do you suppose your mother would step here for a minute?"

"I'll go see," she breathed; put lamp and umbrella into his hands, and ran up the walk, to reappear almost instantly at the door with a small, limping, complaining figure.

"I can't scarcely climb down these stairs," they heard a querulous, fretting voice, as the daughter paused to assist and hurry her. "Getting my feet wet is mighty apt to make my rheumatism worse. Why can't them folks come in?"

"Hush, ma!" remonstrated the preacher's wife. "They haven't got time."

The old woman was on the sidewalk now, shrunken, meager, with a pair of very bright eyes in her thin face, flashing out as she entered the circle of light. She took hold of the buggy, and peered in.

"Young folks thinks they haven't time for a heap o' things when they're gettin' married; but they'll find there's aplenty of time afterward—it's a long time afterward," she commented.

Her daughter hastily took the lamp, the parson opened his book. Cliffe was concerned to make her responses in the right place. She listened to the deep murmur of her bridegroom's answers, and, when the ring was called for, gazed with a sort of dismay at the strange, heavy, barbaric circlet he drew from his pocket and put on her finger. It was not such a ring as one would have expected Julius to select. It looked as though it had been hammered from a lump of virgin gold by clumsy tools. And yet, somehow, the combination on her slim hand was piquant, quaintly pleasing, suggestive, as though the primitive ages of the past had reached forward to touch this highly evolved flower of the present day.

With a sudden tightening in her throat like terror, Cliffe heard the concluding words of the ceremony. For an instant she closed her eyes, and then she was aware that the man at her side was prompting her to take the preacher's outstretched hand.

"Mrs. Crittenden—Mr. Crittenden —" The little parson began on his exhortation, reaching across the muddy wheel and sadly smearing his coat. "I want to be the first to take your hands and wish you a long and blessed life journey together. We are in the keeping of Providence in this world, but the Lord has ordained the holy estate of matrimony, and it is His will that man should be more happy in it than in any other—than livin' any other way." He broke down suddenly from the set speech which he evidently offered each couple united by him. "I see this here is a runaway match," he concluded hurriedly. "I hope I haven't done wrong to further it. If you truly love each



"Be careful. Nobody's gone to bed yet."

other, I've done no wrong. Don't set your hearts on the foolish things of this world; but, after Gawd, a man and a woman should love each other best, and he'p each other always. Gawd bless you both."

It was an incoherent, rather inconsequent jumble of words; but something in the little parson's earnestness vaguely touched the girl. Had she and Julius ever given any such thought to their union as this humble Methodist preacher suggested? The flirtation of which this elopement was the culmination had begun back in the days when Jule was a cadet at the military academy, and she was an actual student in Miss Lassiter's Model School for Young Ladies. It had continued after he was a young man in business in the town, and she had returned, by her guardian's orders, for a post-graduate musical course.

She was rebelliously aware that her Great-uncle Horace put her at Miss Lassiter's school because he did not wish

to be burdened with a full-fledged young lady. The little town was dull. Julius Crittenden was easily the most eligible parti in its most select circle. His mother was her uncle's friend. The affair went more hastily because her Uncle Horace wanted them to wait. Such were the trivial elements which had made the match that the little parson thought would be successful if they loved each other more than anything but God. She smiled uncomprehendingly.

"I want to see 'em," the second witness to the ceremony was protesting, while the bridegroom drew from his pocket heavy gold coins that clinked as he dropped them into the pastor's waiting palm.

It was antique, romantic, and sorted very well with an elopement; but it was strange, indeed, to see Julius Crittenden paying the preacher who married him with twenty-dollar gold pieces. A check in an

envelope would have been what she expected from his ideas of elegance.

The old woman on the sidewalk, evidently a privileged invalid, snatched the lamp from her daughter's hand, and held it high, looking squarely into the faces of the bride and groom. Cliffe instantly turned aside.

"She's mighty pretty," breathed the old woman, apparently under the delusion that she could not be heard. "But she looks sorter stuck-up. Eh—law! One of them kind of women can jest about eat the life out of a man and never notice. But she's mighty pretty."

"You mustn't mind her," pleaded the parson hastily. "She doesn't mean any harm. She's old, and she's seen a heap of trouble."

Apparently the bridegroom had heard but the praise of his bride's beauty. His own face was still in shadow. As the lamp was withdrawn by the parson, a sudden gleam illuminated his eager eyes and smiling lips.

"Didn't have a minute to come in the house and be married like white folks," the old woman pursued. "But I seen 'em, all the same. Didn't have time. Young folks thinks they ain't time for a heap o' things when they're gettin' married; but they'll find there's aplenty of time afterward—it's a long time afterward."

She repeated her aphorisms, and now it brought a reply.

"Thank you for saying that," cried the bridegroom. "Thank God there will be a long time after we're married. I'm glad we're young."

The gaunt face relaxed and twitched, the fever-bright eyes filled with tears. Cliffe saw them in the lamplight. Then the parson, overwhelmed with his fee, a little afraid of what he had done, turned awkwardly. They could see for a moment only the damaged umbrella, and heard the woman's faint outcry as this knocked against the lamp in her hand.

Firefly, who had stood through all the strange doings, responded to the lifting of the lines, was off, and Clifford felt herself caught, held so closely that she could scarcely breathe, crushed against her bridegroom with a strength he evidently did not realize, while swift kisses covered her face, her hands, the hair that waved about her temples.

"You're mine, Cliffe. Do you savvy that?" the big voice demanded exultantly, a full note of triumph in it. "You're mine—mine! Nothing in heaven or hell can take you away from me."

"Julius, are you crazy?" the girl demanded, trying to draw herself free. "I never knew you like this. What's the matter?"

It seemed only part of the dreadful unreality of everything that her companion wordlessly maintained that passionately possessive hold. He did not intermit his caresses. She doubted if he heard her.

There had been a low muttering of thunder as they left the parsonage, now the first drops of rain began to fall. With them came a jagged flash of lightning which cut across the night sky, and, for a moment, held the world quiv-

ering in its unreal illumination. Cliffe resigning herself to her new-made husband's embrace, half frightened by it, and by the emotions it evoked in her, yet turning responsive lips to his, recoiled as far as his constraining arm would allow. A sense of nightmare—terror of her own sanity—almost throttled her.

"Heath! Heath Crittenden!" she whispered.

There was a swift indrawing of breath in the breast beneath her head. She felt the muscles in the arm that held her swell as for a struggle. His face had been pale as she glimpsed it in that lightning flash; or was it the ghastly illumination which lent that pallor to his tanned cheek?

"Yes, it's Heath, darling," came the deep response. "Your husband, Heath Crittenden. Didn't you know it before, Cliffe?"

"Let me go—let me go! Take your arm away," she said, almost inaudibly. "Let me alone. Oh—"

She broke off and was silent, while the mare plunged forward through the storm, the buggy rocked and swayed, and Heath made no movement to release her. Instead, he bent his head close, the murmured endearments went on as though she had accepted them, responded to them. She struggled in his hold.

"Don't do that, darling," he whispered, his lips close to her ear. "You'll hurt yourself. Don't! You—you knew who it was all the time, didn't you? You never thought it was Julie."

She answered with incoherent ejaculations, accusations; but the instant she ceased to resist he was still, finding, it appeared, response enough in her nearness. It seemed to the girl a long time that they rode thus, she cowering, huddled as far away from him as she could get, her eyes shut futilely against the darkness; her fingers clutched over ears that would have heard nothing but the sounds of the night and the moving vehicle. When she dropped her hands in her lap, they were instantly, silently clasped in Heath's. The eyes she opened were closed again by his quick kisses.

But he uttered no word. This masculine power of silence somehow gave him the ascendancy. She tried to think, to understand.

"I hate you!" she broke forth.

It was a childish speech, and apparently accepted as a child's outburst. The arm about her relaxed; was gently, slowly withdrawn. She was free.

"There, now," Heath said indulgently, "is she better pleased? We'll drive out this road a piece, and talk it all over before we go to the station."

The tide of the storm swelled and spent itself. The mare and buggy splashed through rain and dark, and Heath Crittenden made the clumsy efforts of a boy of twelve to placate this bride whom he had stolen from his brother.

"I thought you'd like it," he reiterated. "I believed you'd like me best. Don't you know that first night when I was telling you about the Klondike, and Oraibi, and the Painted Desert out there? How you sent Jule away and stayed with me, and wouldn't dance with any one else? It wasn't only that—you must know how you looked at me, darling. Didn't all of that mean anything?"

What had it meant? Merely the practiced trying of a thoroughly evolved coquette's armament of weapons on a man whose crude simplicity took them for the primitive and genuine movement of the woman toward her mate. This Clifford might have told the man beside her had she completely understood it herself. She did not. Why, she always used her power over men to the utmost—any girl did that. It was the game. The man must take care of himself. Most of all, he must never think that her words or actions bound her to anything. Nobody but a brute or a savage would have acted on such premises. Acted—he had married her. Out of the rage and terror of that thought she spoke.

The floodway of her utterance was jammed sometimes by a sudden perception of her own fault in the matter; and, when this was so, bitterness gathered

big behind the barrier, and surged over with augmented fury.

Always when she made the slightest pause, her bridegroom replied with a murmured word that went past any note of forgiving, to tremble on the chords of deep, passionate tenderness. Sometimes he would pat her hand, or draw the rug up over her. When she waited long enough, he told her of his love, or offered for her consideration some prospect of their future together which seemed to him alluring.

"It must be past midnight," she sighed wearily, at length, when she had fetched one more conversational circle, and come up against the statement that Heath loved her very much, they were married now, and that they would be extremely happy when she "got used" to him.

"Yes, we're too late for that eleven-forty-five train," Heath made haste to agree; "but we can stay over at the Depot Hotel, and take the early morning train."

There was a belated moon struggling out of the scurrying clouds above them; and, in its tarnished light, Cliffe turned and looked at the man she had married. A clean, strong jaw; resolute eyes, with an odd slant of the brow above them; great beauty she saw in his face; but beauty of a crude and primitive order, as though he belonged to a time earlier than her own. Was he really proposing to take her to that squalid Depot Hotel, where they would, no doubt, be given the "bridal chamber" as might the brakeman and his bride?

The mere contemplation of it seemed to put her in danger. It was as though she had surrendered her right of resistance. In sudden panic, she caught at the lines—his hand.

"Turn round!" she cried, with violence. "I'll jump out if you don't! Take me back to the school!"

## CHAPTER II.

In silence, and with a swiftness that took Cliffe's breath, experienced whip as she was, Heath wheeled his horse in the narrow way, and started back. As they

approached the house, the girl stared in the struggling moonlight at the big, ungainly frame building, with its homely architecture of the early eighties. She had loathed the place in a way, and now it was suddenly a refuge.

"You needn't come in," she said as they drew up at the gate.

Heath sprang out and raised peremptory arms. For a moment she strove to evade this; then resistance seemed too futile. She decided that she would make use of his assistance as she might that of a servant.

He lifted her down with no apparent feeling. She was abruptly aware of a masculine quality in his handling of the situation, a temper before which women inevitably quail. She turned blindly to the gate. He had gone to Firefly's head, and was speaking to the horse in a low tone as he knotted the lines up, still making no move to tie them.

"Do you think that's safe?" she asked, her hand upon the latch.

"Safe or not, it's my way," Heath returned. "I don't tie anything or anybody. What belongs to me stays with me. What doesn't belong—can go."

He tramped after her noisily, inconsistently. He was not letting her go. He was trying to tie her. He had tied her cruelly. All this swelled painfully in her mind as they made their way up the walk. One light glimmered in the bulk of the house, where Miss Lassiter sat in the downstairs parlor perusing some book of her own choice. At ordinary times, she read an improving work in this room to the seniors, while Miss Hanscombe, in the back parlor, similarly enriched the understanding of the juniors. To-night she was free, since the girls were mostly gone, or going home for the Thanksgiving vacation.

Cliffe mounted the steps, went along the porch, and paused at a French window. Heath followed. The lamp shine showed him his bride's figure. The tap-tap of her small feet on the porch floor led him. For sheer love, he could have set those light feet to walk over his heartstrings. Cliffe turned the knob, and pushed the casement open.

"Miss Lassiter," she said, in that quiet, even voice her pastors and masters knew well to dread, "I ran away and got married this evening. I'm sorry."

It was "enter Orlando with his sword drawn." The teacher sprang up as if galvanized, staring incredulously at the girl's dark, disheveled head, a white scarf slipping from it, the eyes big with excitement, the face pale, and at the figure of the man beyond, framed by the window, looking inappropriately virile and rugged for such a place. He had not removed his hat, and she had a grotesque impulse to reprove him.

"You're sorry you—*what?*?" the teacher asked, in bewilderment.

Cliffe had not stated clearly whether she regretted her marriage or only the manner of it—and that merely because it was against Miss Lassiter's rules. Advancing into the room, the girl stopped at the table, looking down at the books upon it.

"I was to have run away and married Julius Crittenden to-night," she explained, falling unconsciously into the pupil's manner with her old instructress, speaking like a child reciting a lesson. "I waited for him on the side porch. We had agreed upon a word, for a sort of signal. It was dark. Heath Crittenden came. He—he said the word, and I went with him, and got married. I've married the wrong man, Miss Lassiter."

Automatically, the schoolmistress assumed that bearing which forty semesters of evildoers had found terrible.

"From my school!" she ejaculated. "An elopement! Oh, what shall I say to Major McFarland?"

A flicker of grim amusement went over the tanned face in the doorway. Heath considered the schoolmistress' countenance of uncomprehending horror, and stepped forward, removing the offending headgear, thereby uncovering a sweep of blond hair, rain-gemmed; blue, viking eyes that shone with male authority; a nose and chin forth-putting, fierce, had all not been softened by youth's suavity of outline.

"Cliffe and I were married by the



Methodist parson," he explained briefly, in his deep voice. "It's quite regular. I got the license in my name. She's a little upset now; but that's all foolishness about its being the wrong man—she married the right one. Jule would never have done for her."

Lips apart, Miss Lassiter retreated mutely before them. After a few backward steps, her groping hands found and shut the door into the hall.

"Hush!" she whispered shakily. "Don't speak so loud. I—this is a very strange affair, Mr. Crittenden," she appealed to the man. "Do I understand that Clifford mistook you for your brother? That you impersonated Mr. Julius Crittenden—and deceived her?"

Heath only got a glimpse of the girl's profile. At this he looked with glowing, undisguised adoration. Around his lips trembled that half smile, an indulgent fondness, that rated her most stinging phrases as a child's outburst, or a coquette's raillery.

"I don't think Cliffe was deceived," said he confidently. "She knew it wasn't Jule. Cliffe and I have understood each other from the first minute."

Schoolmistress and bridegroom studied the girl, the pivot on which all must now turn. She was made for love and lovers. From the mist of dusk hair which clung about her beautifully carried head, to the tiny hands and feet that said to every man, in their inadequacy, "Help me—take care of me," she was all beguiling, feminine charm. Those dark eyes were lamps of love, indeed; the wonderful, tender textures of her, like a flower, the marvelous whiteness of throat and brow, the voice whose lowered cadence wooed her listener with a hint of murmured singing—these marked her as a creature formed to rule by captivating, seducing the judgment of all who looked upon her.

And here was this fathom of blond manhood as out of boarding school reckoning as a phoenix; unconsciously insolent with the courage of young passion, the ignorant security that his passion was returned. He seemed to Miss Lassiter's narrow experience so strange,

so wonderful, so completely a being from another sphere, and so plainly helpless in this her world, that she had a sudden impulse of tenderness toward him.

"There—you see!" Clifford spoke in an undertone, her eyes on the floor. "He has taken decently polite behavior for my falling in love with him." Sudden red welled in her cheeks. She faced him. "I hate you," she said, as she had once before that night.

"This—this is awful," chattered the schoolmistress, looking from one to the other of the beautiful, passionate young creatures suddenly confronted in her quiet spinster's sitting room, with their tale of love and hate, their unseemly news of a stolen marriage. "Oh, what shall I do?" she appealed helplessly to the drab walls about her, the book-cases full of instructive works, the trim, scholastic neatness.

Her gaze came back to interrogate the two who had invaded her peace. The girl stood, as she had when she first entered the room, looking down at the books on the table, leaving the onus of the scene with the others. The man accepted that speech of hers with a tolerance which it seemed nothing could shake. There was something so primitive in the passing over of feminine resistance, the looks of persistent adoration set upon a reluctant mate, that Miss Lassiter was flung sharply away from considering mere appearances—the surface of things—such matters as her profession bade her always concern herself with.

"But—but you love him now." She began her speech in the middle of a thought, with a quaint effect of replying to something which had been spoken. "Oh, Clifford, tell me that you love this man. It would be too terrible to be married to a man you didn't love."

Slowly Clifford's eyes were raised to the other's face, and studied it with a puzzled gaze. It was infinitely strange to see Miss Lassiter's quiet countenance so changed by emotion, to hear the dry voice one had been used to associating with algebraic formulas pleading of love and marriage.



*The preacher opened his book, and seemed about to begin the service.*

"I don't even know him." The bride summed it up coldly. "I don't know whether I should like him or not if we were at all acquainted."

"Oh, you can't say that—you can't say that," protested Miss Lassiter, in acute distress. "You—you've met him several times. He was at our recital and our reception here, and I'm sure I thought him a very—you've met him several times, Clifford."

Heath smiled, and stepped closer to the older woman. Here was an ally.

"I'm sorry we should have run away from your school," he said. "It makes you trouble, doesn't it? I never thought of that. I wasn't thinking of anything but Cliffe."

Miss Lassiter turned a swimming gaze on him. Her soft, old heart, pitiously vulnerable under its futile armor of dry, moral maxims, was all aflutter at him, his ardor, his boldness. The glow of those eyes, the warmth and tenderness of his tones; she thawed her

numbed emotions in them as a chance wayfarer at a fire laid for another.

"Will you let me stay here to-night, Miss Lassiter?" Cliffe abruptly took the discussion out of their hands. She had suddenly the air of an older person speaking to children who needs must obey. She made resolutely for the door, and the other two followed perforce.

"Yes," the bridegroom said, "that'll be best. It's near midnight now. I'll come for her early in the morning. We won't be in your way long."

They passed out into the hall now, close together. Clifford gave a keen glance at Heath. She had spoken to him insultingly there in the road. She had supposed he was angry when he wheeled and brought her back to the school. Yet he was not giving her up. She was aware of something unfamiliar in him—out of her world. It was not possible for her to reckon exactly with one who had lived those adventures of Heath Crittenden's which she found

fascinating in the telling. A being with delicately expanded sensibilities would have failed or perished in that rough life. That Heath had in him potentialities of finer feeling was what she at that moment doubted. She was on the stairway, going up to her own room, and Miss Lassiter was letting Heath out of the front door, when the schoolmistress spoke as to friend and counselor.

"I don't know how on earth I shall tell Major McFarland," she lamented.

"You don't need to tell him." Heath turned in the doorway with the night behind him. If Cliffe had looked down at him then, he made a brave picture for a bride's eyes. "Take good care of my wife for me. I'll explain to Major McFarland myself. That's my business. Neither you nor Cliffe ought to be worried about it."

He took Miss Lassiter's hand as he spoke, and retained it, looking down into her thin, troubled countenance from his superior height. Cliffe went on upstairs. The young man and the older woman stood for a time talking in whispers. When Miss Lassiter came back into the hall her eyes were wet—but she was smiling. She lingered, bolting, barring, making all secure before going to her own chamber. A breath from Eden companioned her as she walked through the dingy, old house. An immortal had passed. She yet felt the brushing of mighty pinions.

"Bless the boy!" she found herself murmuring. "He ought not to have done it—but— Foolish children! Of course she's in love with him—she couldn't resist him. They'll be very happy—poor things!"

### CHAPTER III.

Cliffe entered her room, still walking haughtily, sustained by that hardness of mood which had come over her during the latter part of the interview in Miss Lassiter's study. She crossed to the bureau, lighted the gas, and regarded with unseeing eyes the face that looked back at her out of the depths of the mirror. Below, she could hear the deep murmur of Heath's voice, alternat-

ing with Miss Lassiter's plaintive tones. Her lip curled in a sort of bitter amusement. Did they think they were settling her affairs down there—the silly old woman and the young barbarian? Once more she caught the eyes of the girl in the glass; and a little tremor reminded her that she was looking at Heath Crittenden's wife—his wife!

Well, what of it? This persistent amiability, this steady course on his part, seemed to give her a complicity in his act. It was now as though she had known it from the first, and had agreed. But that, after all, it was only a nightmare of darkness. To-morrow's light would bring her own, rallying to protect her. Uncle Horace—she would telegraph him—Julius, of course, and dear Mrs. Crittenden. She was Julius' mother, too. She would be sorry now that she had sent for that younger Ishmael to leave his wilds and come home among civilized people.

The girl tried to get back to her early impressions of Heath. She was secretly engaged to Julius Crittenden when his brother returned from that vague region known as "the West." He was younger than Julius; but he had been in the Klondike, he had crossed to the Orient, had lived in Mexico, and for his present residence he told her strange, fascinating stories of the pueblo dwellers in the Painted Desert region, of captive eagles crouched against the sunset on the flat roofs of Oraibi, where he seemed to be engaged in some sort of enterprise. He had descended upon the sleepy, little Kentucky town like a Goth, disembarked at its dingy station as might a viking of old, flamed across its dull, social sky, a portent.

And what more natural than that Clifford McFarland, weary of the monotony of her days, kept in school long after her graduation by a bachelor uncle, who did not like the responsibility of her and her conquests, should attract the lightning, and be, perhaps, attracted by it?

She had seen him first one Sunday in church, when the whole congregation was agog over the way he stared at her. Other smitten swains had gazed at other

girls in that same sacred edifice; but there seemed to be something about the directness of the Westerner's methods which was indefinitely subversive and alarming.

After that came the few occasions at his mother's home, a reception, and a dance. She had allowed him to occupy her entire attention at the latter, because he was unlike any man she had ever known. He had the crudity and directness of a schoolboy. The subtleties of her ordinary methods passed him by. When she treated him with favor he monopolized her; when she attempted to discipline him with a snub, he laughed at her. She recognized the spirit of the man who had lifted her from the porch edge and carried her in his arms to the waiting vehicle, whose eyes worshiped her while she sought for taunts that would convince him of her dislike.

Then that evening of the musicale here in the school—she had spent most of it seated on the stairs with Heath talking about Oraibi. The girls in the adjoining rooms played long, classical selections, the people kept up that murmur of conversation which maddens one on such occasions, and Heath described the great midwinter festival of the Indians in the Painted Desert. He spoke of the maidens who came from the Hopi Elysium of Kachinaland laden with greenery, and the song their kneeling suitors sang; and she asked him to sing it for her. He hummed a bit of it, in a great voice brought down to a mere murmuring whisper. She remembered the sound of the Hopi words, and she was unable to forget his translation of them, since he had pointed his meaning with all-too-ardent glances.

Come to us, Makers of Delight.  
Remain with us, O, Joy Bringers.

That was what the Indian youth sang to his beloved, that was what Heath's eyes daringly applied to herself. He had not waited for her to come to him. He had snatched her from the midst of her plans, crudely, barbarously, it seemed to her, as the savage he told of might snatch at that which pleased his barbarian fancy. It was maddening—it

was almost terrifying—the way the measure of it got into her thoughts and checked them off.

O, Joy Bringers! O, Joy Bringers!

She crossed to the window and threw up the sash. Heath had bid Miss Lasiter good night, and was going down the walk. She heard the splash of his feet as he crossed the puddles in the gravel over which he had carried her. Dimly she saw the outline of the horse at the gate. His wisdom in refusing to tie the animal was justified. Firefly, a famous breaker of hitching reins and halters, had stood for Heath Crittenden—she had waited his return.

With a sudden clenching of the hands, Cliffe dropped down by the casement. She had loved widowed Annie Crittenden none the less that some division long ago set the two families at odds. She had engaged herself to the son, Julius, the more readily that she felt sure her Uncle Horace would refuse his consent to the match. Now she had married into the Crittenden family, indeed. Of course, the major would set his skill to freeing her.

And Annie Crittenden? She must choose between that dear woman's sons. She would cling to Julius. All banded together, they would put this intruder where he belonged—outside. It was only her isolation that lent him momentary power.

Even with the thought came memory of Heath's face and his mother's side by side—and so like. The slant brow above her Madonna-blue eyes was tender and womanly in her; its touch of wildness quenched in a sort of pathos; yet mother and son were mysteriously linked. Cliffe put aside the thought feverishly.

Somebody passed on the sidewalk; somebody who apparently saw her light, stopped at the gate, came through, and quietly up the walk. She regarded the figure fixedly, unable to move or speak, though she recognized height and bearing. The man disappeared in the shadow of the porch below.

She rose, trembling strangely, and moved toward the open door of her room, with an impulse she did not un-

derstand. Suddenly her name, called in Heath's voice, made her whirl and cry out. Even as she turned, there was a little, ripping sound of vines upon the trellis; the dark, empty square of the open window was vividly filled. It was Heath himself, breathing quick, his fair face flushed, his eyes alight. Her heart sank strangely before the vigorous beauty of the creature, that charm in him which had laid hold of her in those first interviews. It must not move her now.

He swung lightly over the sill, and came toward her with both hands out.

"Cliffe," he cried, and there was a new note in his voice; something that sent her hurrying to close that wide-open door. He followed. "Cliffe, darling—I had to come back—I must speak to you. I couldn't say what I meant—what I felt—what I know you expected—down there—with her. I couldn't."

Cliffe need not have drawn back from him until she stood almost against the wall. He made no attempt to lay those entreating hands upon her. He stood there, and studied her with a pleading almost desperate.

"Don't—Cliffe, don't try to harden your heart. I—you're mad, now—you're offended; but, sweetheart, you do really love me—" He paused a moment. His flushed face reddened more deeply at her silence. Then he hurried on: "What I did was wrong—I know it now. Forgive me. We're married, girl. You're my wife. When you get over being mad at me, we'll be so happy. You didn't mean what you said down there to-night. But I couldn't bear to leave it that way."

It seemed that Cliffe would have spoken. Plainly she made the effort; but no sound came. Only those eyes of hers denied him, cried accusations upon him. Heath, reading them, yet drew nearer, and his voice gained intensity.

"Can't you go back to the way you used to be, love—for just a minute—before I leave you? Remember, darling, how we were always together. And you"—the words were almost inaudible, just a murmur of deep tenderness—"you let me kiss you, Cliffe. You

wouldn't have done that if you'd expected to marry my brother."

Now it was Cliffe's turn to redden. Over her face rushed the tide of anger and mortification. He advised, did he? Oh, intolerable!

"I—that was—you had no right to think—what you say," she protested, speaking with difficulty. "I never gave you any reason to do what you've done."

He looked bewildered, keenly distressed, at fault.

"Of course you didn't—not out and out," he groped helplessly. "But you gave me to understand things. You did like me, you cared for me. You never looked at me this way, then. You don't mean it to be so, but it's cruel."

"What can you expect after the way you've behaved?" demanded Cliffe. "What can you expect?"

"I never expect things," said Heath. "I just want them. I've been wanting you from the first minute I saw you. I thought you'd been wanting me, too."

His glance fell upon her hand where his wedding ring should have been, and was not. She could see that its removal bewildered, but stimulated, him, that his own ardor was not merely proof against her resistance, it was augmented.

"I took the ring off as soon as I knew who you were," she said cuttingly. "Shall I get it for you?"

But she made no move to do so.

"See here," he said hoarsely. "Cliffe, you as good as told me that you were planning to marry Jule because your Uncle Horace kept you here in school and wouldn't give you a chance at a—at a woman's life. Why, I thought you wanted me to steal you from Julius. You did—Cliffe—you did!" The words were confident, but the tone was husky under its burden of entreaty.

His gaze took in all her beauty, proclaimed and celebrated it. That look was the Suitors' Song dramatized. Her own eyes fell before it. With a gesture of exasperated relinquishment, she threw out her hands. Did he take it for an invitation? With one movement, the lithe, lightning swiftness of which daunted her, he caught her in his arms, whispering passionately:



"You did want me—you do want me."

Over Cliffe rushed the feeling that had possessed her while Heath bore her in his arms from the porch to the gate. She had believed then that the man who held her was Julius; but she found in that embrace what Julius could never have given her—a sense of something stronger than herself, something of which she stood in terror. For all its subtlety, she was aware of its vast cumulative power; it antedated her and her polite plans of life; it had run for ages through creation's veins, mighty, inexorable, blind; carrying the squaw along the path at her lord's heel, with back bent to the burdens he might set upon it, lighting in her eye the furtive look of the watching dog that studies the face of his master.

Utterly Heath misread the girl's moment of passivity. It seemed that he had his wife at last.

"We're married, Cliffe," he whispered brokenly. "I'm your husband, dear. It was awful to me to go away and leave you as though somebody might deny that—as though it wasn't so. But it's all right now—it's all right with us, isn't it?"

Strong, Cliffe had always felt herself in dealing with men, but she quailed before the thought of attempting adjustment with Heath. His arms lay lightly about her—a lover's arms; but to the mounting panic of her fear their clasp was terrible in its power. The untried—the unknown—was engulfing her. Within her cried out the wild, acute instinct of the drowning creature. She thrust herself back a little from him, and for one whirling moment stared into the glowing face bent to hers; then, with a fierce, half-awkward gesture, flung up the freed hand, and struck.

"Go!"

She gasped out but the one word, closed her eyes, and groped blindly from him.

The whistling of the gas which she had turned too high presently forced itself upon her attention where she crouched. She looked around. He was gone. The open window yawned black

and empty. Puffs of chill, damp air came in through it, bearing the odor of rotting leaves and wet earth. She heard his footsteps receding down the walk.

#### CHAPTER IV.

She opened her eyes unwillingly—and closed them again. Her night, when at last she slept, had been haunted by a dream, a strange vision of an amorphic, troglodytic world, where she walked with terrors, and the wind sang to her in Heath Crittenden's voice, sang the Suitors' Song. The morning was well advanced; but a November day that sulked, and sobbed, and repented in bursts of watery sunlight was filling the room with the modified, melancholy uproar of its grief. It was weather for secure hearts and hearthstones, a time to grapple love close and forget old animosities; but with Cliffe's waking, memory of what had befallen leaped upon her, vivid, detailed, importunate.

There was no sound in the house. She dressed swiftly, feeling that with each familiar item of the prosaic task she would break through the dream that held her. Surely, the happenings of last night must crumble at the touch of reality. No, there lay the dress that she had ordered for a bride's traveling wear. Down at the station were her trunks containing a bride's trousseau. She had managed to get them out and away on the pretense that she was preparing for a house party during the Thanksgiving holidays.

The long, shabby, ill-kept corridor outside her door looked deserted; but, as she stepped forth, she could hear distant sounds; somebody's trunk was thumping down the back stairs. The tread and voices of the baggagemen came to her faintly. As she reached the lower hall, she found Miss Lassiter pacing in front of the dining room; the schoolmistress had been up since dawn, hustling away such girls as could be persuaded to leave on the early train; she was protecting the others as from contagion. She met her ex-pupil near the dining-room door, regarded her with anxious eyes. In the look there was



*"I ran away and got married this evening. I'm sorry."*

something new; the accost one woman gives another—rather the respect the spinster yields the married wife; but, in the preoccupation of her own anxieties, Cliffe scarcely noted it.

"I thought you might like to have breakfast with me—in my room," the principal suggested.

Cliffe nodded with a certain languor. Suffering made her manner haughty.

"Just as you like. Thank you very much," she said indifferently. Then, when she had followed Miss Lassiter through the great, empty dining room and into a smaller apartment, and was seated at a little table: "I am afraid I shan't be able to eat anything. Is the coffee strong? My head aches. I'd like a good strong cup."

Miss Lassiter dropped instantly to second in command. She found herself sending the round-faced negro maid out for fresh coffee made stronger. The beverage was never recommended for

young girls in her charge; but Cliffe had become suddenly a personage. Her heavy eyes, the violet shadows on the cheek beneath, made their appeal; and Tillie, as she placed the steaming, fragrant cup before her, said in her mellow, motherly voice:

"Dat'll do you lots of good, Miss Cliffe. Mr. Crittenden's down in de poller when you'll gits th'oo your breakfast."

Miss Lassiter looked the more startled of the two; but Cliffe's composure barely hid a tremor that mounted well nigh to panic. It was come—the reckoning. Ever since she waked she had been trying to escape something, striving to get away from memory of the look in a man's eyes just after she had struck his pleading face. Now she must meet it. The older woman was speaking.

"Do you want me to see him for you, Clifford?" she asked. "Should you wish me present at the interview?"

"No," said the girl, after some consideration. "Thank you, I'll just see him alone, I believe. Where is he?"

She rose, and put her napkin back on the table. The coffee sat untasted. Tillie looked distressed.

"Drink yo' coffee, honey. 'Tain't nobody but Mr. Julius," she explained.

Cliffe was at the door, her hand outstretched toward the knob. She turned, pushing back her hair from her brow, and drawing her fingers across her eyes.

"I believe I'll ask you to come with me, Miss Lassiter," she said, without appearing to have changed her plans because it was the older brother and not the younger, as she had expected it would be.

They entered the shabby, little reception room together, Miss Lassiter half a pace behind the girl. He was in the middle of the apartment, standing uncertainly by its marble-topped center table, laying his hat down, taking it up again as a sort of shield. Cliffe paused an inconsiderable moment in the door, taking note of his attitude, much surer of her ground, as a woman always is in such an interview. It seemed strange to come forward toward Julius and only put out her hand. The young fellow accepted it uncertainly, looked over her shoulder toward Miss Lassiter with evident relief, let the slim fingers drop, and greeted the schoolmistress at some length.

A very clever fencer, with purely artificial forms of intercourse, this young man found himself curiously at fault before the bald reality of the present situation. Had it been some mishap on the dancing floor, some entanglement in the leading of a cotillion, nobody could have extricated his partner with more satisfactory grace than Julius Crittenden, the son of his father. He had a genius for the surface of things, the seemliness of that which is itself set up for more seemliness. In his heart he considered many of the fundamental facts of life unrepresentable, if not indecent. Wherever in his own course he demanded for himself liberty, it was in a highly conventional way; something to run smoothly, in a concealed groove.

Therefore his glance shunned beautiful Clifford, and rested with relief on the chill homeliness of the conformable, elderly woman. What would he be expected to say to this bride whom his brother had stolen from him? How far had her complicity in the thing gone? Had she and Heath plotted to make a fool of him? He was desperately concerned that in the impending negotiations he himself should cut a dignified figure.

"Well?" Cliffe prompted him, when he could talk no longer to Miss Lassiter.

The girl's head was up, her eyes alight. She studied his half-sulky bearing, wondering at the ineptitude of the man.

"Well," the young fellow repeated, with an echoing note of irritation in his tone, "I've come to get a straight story of what happened here last night. Heath must have gone right from this place to my house. Mother called me into the consultation at five o'clock this morning. She denied then that he was under the roof. I suppose she was afraid that there might be trouble if we met, but I'd heard his voice as I came down the stairs. I give you my word, I found it hard to believe the tale he told her. Cliffe, what have you to say to me?"

They were all three standing. With a sudden, weary, contemptuous, little gesture, Cliffe sat down near the table.

"Nothing," she said. "Of course, what your mother told you was the truth. The important thing is to decide what we're going to do about it."

He was aware of some expectation on her part which he was not fulfilling. He resented deeply her attitude of command.

"We? Well, I like that—from you. The fellow's my brother—my only brother. I overlooked your making eyes at him and pretending a big interest in his tall stories; but I wasn't fooled—I saw it all. Now I'm expected to believe that he has personated me, and you married him by mistake—*by mistake!* A pretty mess! And what a fool you've made of me!"

It seemed to Cliffe that now, for the first time, she really saw the man who

had been her lover. In height and contour, the brothers were much the same. This must have been so, or last night's deception could not have carried. Beyond that, there was little in common between the one whom she had hoped would fight for her and the young Goth who must needs be his adversary. Julius Crittenden was handsome, well-groomed, perfectly dressed, markedly artificial. If Heath was a blazing portent in the sky, Julius was a well-tended, conventional street lamp. It may be remembered that when the lightning flashes, the street lamps are extinguished to the eye, suddenly reduced to a row of meaningless posts with no flame at top.

Yet Julius was the man she had selected; and she was unconscious of her own injustice in resenting his inability to meet forcefully a primitive call, a pressing emergency.

"Julius!" she cried, astonishment rather than anger bringing the color to her cheeks.

"It seems to me, Mr. Crittenden," put in the schoolmistress, roused from her conventional restraint of manner, "that the feelings of this poor child are to be considered first. I am surprised at you!"

With a shrug of his broad shoulders, he turned to the window, and stood staring out, his back to both women.

"It'll be nice and pleasant for me on the streets and at the club, won't it?" he demanded, without looking around.

"Why did you not keep your appointment with me last night?" Cliffe accused hotly. "How did Heath know of it, and come to keep it in your place?"

After a considerable pause, Crittenden replied, using the offensively authoritative tone which men of his type assume in their domestic differences with their womenfolk.

"He knew because I told him." Extravagant gallantries must be paid for somewhere. Those who deal in such speeches as his no doubt regard them as but the dark side of courtship's moon. His voice mounted a bit in key, and became browbeating. "I told him because it was necessary for me to have some

one to help me in the matter. Heath's my brother. I supposed he'd keep a close mouth about it. He was to get the license for me. It seems he knew more than I did, at any rate, and he got it in his own name instead. I sent him to you in good faith last night to tell you that your Uncle Horace was in town. What happened after he got here you know, and I don't."

"You—sent—Heath to me." Cliffe repeated the words incredulously.

"Major McFarland in town!" cried Miss Lassiter, in dismay.

"Yes." Crittenden came abruptly to the mantelpiece, kicked the fire in place, and thereafter rested an uneasy toe on the fender, speaking over his shoulder, keeping his side face to the women, with a wary, cornering glance for signs of hysteria. "Major McFarland is down at the Depot Hotel. I suppose some kind friend warned him of our intention to marry without his consent. When I knew he was here I hunted up Heath, and asked him to notify you. I told him where he'd find you, and——"

"Did you tell him the password?" Cliffe spoke as though unwilling.

"Good Lord—no!" exploded Julius.

"Has anybody been to see Major McFarland this morning?" Miss Lassiter asked, mindful of Heath's promise to attend to the matter.

"I have," returned Julius. "My mother is there now. Heath had been ahead of us, and Major McFarland seems to—well—he sent you a letter that probably embodies his views. I—he was most reasonable. He seemed to consider my position, if nobody else. He said—just read the letter, Cliffe."

He searched his pockets nervously. He was plainly exasperated at the realization that his attitude was cheap and poor; yet for the life of him he could not find anything other to say or do.

Cliffe knew well her Uncle Horace's powerful and dominating personality. She loved it. These two were the old lion and the young; she could take liberties with him that no one else dared. In these halting phrases, she saw at a flash how the old lawyer had twisted Julius around his finger, how he had

mercilessly put before him the ludicrous aspect of his own position, rendering the girl undesirable, poisoning the thought of her.

Her guardian had opposed the match because he and the Crittendens were at odds. Long before she was born something had happened which separated the two families. It had added to her delight in Annie Crittenden's friendship that it was sought and maintained, as she conceived, in defiance. She took the envelope from Julius' hand and held it unopened.

"I don't see what Uncle Horace's being here has got to do with your not coming for me last night," she said. "What message were you sending to me by—by your brother?"

Julius regarded her with growing exasperation.

"I told Heath to tell you that Major McFarland was in town, and had sent for me. He left me, apparently to do what I said. I went down to the hotel, and your uncle kept me for an hour and a half sitting on the edge of my chair while he discussed your birth and infancy, your characteristics, the difficulties between the Crittendens and the McFarlands, and took a very considerable outlook on the attitude of the modern young woman toward marriage." Memory of it caused him to draw out a handkerchief and pass it across his brow. "Good Lord! I never had such an hour and a half in my life! Of course, as the major was in town, we'd have had to wait anyhow; but it was awful."

In the silence that followed, there was time for the three of them to realize that Heath had not waited, and that the contrast between the methods of the two brothers was unfavorable to the elder, since a laggard lover is no lover at all. Cliffe raised a mocking face to his, and uttered but the two syllables:

"Wait—oh!"

"It's easy for you women to talk." Julius encountered her scorn doggedly. "You were free enough to flirt with my brother until you had the whole village clacking about it, and got him worked up to do a thing like this. Now, I sup-

pose you think it would be fine and manly for me to kill him. But I wash my hands of it. It's your uncle's business—none of mine."

Sudden contempt fell cool on the heat of Cliffe's anger. Why had she ever fancied herself in love with Julius? It must have been because there was nothing better in sight; and largely, too, because of her uncle's opposition.

"So you went home to bed when Uncle Horace was done with you," Cliffe commented, with airy scorn.

"A lot I did!" flung out Julius hotly.

"I went back to the house because I supposed I'd find Heath there. He hadn't been home. It was raining cats and dogs. I'd just sold Firefly to him, and failed to get Red Dan in from the farm. It took me an hour to find a hack. Then I drove round here to the school, and was afraid to come nearer than half a block. I got out and crawled closer in the rain. Anybody that saw me would have taken me for a burglar, or a God-forsaken idiot. Of course, you weren't on the side porch. I looked in at the window, and saw her"—his head ungraciously indicated Miss Lassiter, whose name he appeared, in the heat of the moment, to have forgotten—"sitting reading."

The schoolmistress' withered cheek reddened at the offense in tone and manner, and she winced to think of the alien eyes which had spied upon her privacy the night before.

"After that, I went to Uncle Heath's. You hadn't been there. Who married you? Are you really married?"

"If you mean are we legally married," returned Cliffe coolly, "unless I have friends who want to help me charge conspiracy and set the marriage aside, we certainly are. Your brother seems to make sure of victory when he interferes with your affairs."

"When Heath and I were boys at home," Julius said morosely, "we were always trying our strength against each other. It was the main interest in life for him to beat me at anything. I suppose he thought, in his brutal, cowboy fashion, that he was beating me last night. Let him—let him beat!"



For a moment, Cliffe was desperately sorry that her wedding ring was not on her finger.

"Mr. Crittenden," said the older woman indignantly, "you forget that we have met your brother, Heath, and we know whether he is as you represent him. I talked to him last night. His beautiful devotion touched me very much. Even considering what Cliffe is"—she indicated almost dramatically the young beauty, glowing with pride and anger—"his utter adoration of her must move any heart."

Julius looked at her—the old frump prating of his brother's attractions. His wrath simmered.

"Oh, well, Miss Lassiter," he said sarcastically, "I should suppose any of our girls here would appear a princess to a fellow who's lived the life that Heath has. I don't deny that he may have been very much smitten with Clifford. Even her bit of money—that, of course, cut no figure whatever with me—would seem a magnificent fortune to him."

The schoolmistress found no words.

"I see," broke in Clifford, "that my uncle was right in opposing my engagement to a Crittenden. If either of you have anything to say to me in future, it must be through Major McFarland. I shall go at once to my Uncle Horace. He will speak for me."

Julius had been looking longingly at his hat. He detested scenes; and his temper had led him far in this one. As with a gesture of angry dismissal, Cliffe turned and tore open her letter, Crittenden seized the opportunity to make his escape. He was in the midst of somewhat maimed adieus to the schoolmistress, when they were interrupted by an exclamation from Cliffe.

"Hear this—both of you!" the girl said.

Miss Lassiter and Julius remained standing near the door, and Cliffe read aloud, in a voice that trembled, Horace McFarland's letter:

"MY DEAR NIECE: I have just had an interview with your husband, Heath Crittenden. I regret that you should have taken the grave step of marriage without consulting me, your guardian and only living relative. However, the match is made, and so far as I

can see it promises to be a satisfactory one. I cannot be sure that, if my consent had been solicited to even so hasty a union, I should not have given it, along with my blessing—which I now offer you unasked. To-day, with marriage, you come of age, and you will probably wish to know your own financial standing. I hasten to put it before you. Your father left you no realty whatever, his entire fortune being put into certain mining shares. These ceased to pay dividends before your mother's death, when you were ten years of age, and I supplied to her uses the amount which they had brought in, since at the time she was ill, and in no fit condition to discuss finances. On this same basis I paid the funeral expenses, and took charge of you. Since that time there has been but one small payment on your mining stock, and an assessment that more than covered this amount. I made up the deficit.

"Your father was very dear to me. I have never wished any one to know how unfortunately he managed his affairs at the last. I shall be glad to have you preserve a like silence if you will be so kind. The stocks are in my safe, and at your disposal, or they may be left with me, in the hope that in time they may revive and become valuable.

"I shall wish to see you before you go West; and as I am not very well this morning, I should be glad to have you call on me with your husband.

"Your affectionate uncle,

"HORACE MCFARLAND."

As the girl bent over her reading, Julius was able to look at her as he had not been when her glance was liable to meet his own. It was all there, the beauty that had once charmed him, the patrician finish, the look of race. And when she made an end, standing and facing them, the letter dropped to her side in one shaking hand, while her great, dusk eyes blazed, he saw that beauty doubled, trebled. But it left him cold. Had Venus herself annoyed and belittled him, her cestus would not have saved her, in the first moment of his irritation, from being rated an intolerable person.

"Oh!" she whispered, her voice sinking, instead of rising, with excitement. "To feed me, and clothe me, and take me about—as though I'd been a beggar—and then taunt me with it! Oh!"

Julius quailed. He cursed the major for giving him that note to deliver.

"There must be some mistake," he suggested hurriedly. "You'd better go right to your uncle and talk it over."





*It was Heath himself, breathing quick, his fair face flushed, his eyes alight.*

"I'll never look on his face again if I can help it!" the girl cried.

Miss Lassiter had ridden the cross currents of this interview a storm-tossed bark, but always with an attempt to steer toward some advantage for the absent one. She was surprised that Cliffe did not promptly say to Julius that she preferred his brother; yet the schoolmistress in her could not but admit that this would not have been a lady's course. She went now to the girl, and put a kindly hand upon her shoulder.

"Never mind." She bent down to whisper. "He will be here soon—won't he?"

She drew back in a little dismay to study Cliffe's face, but the girl had not heard her. Julius was getting through the door without much regard for the dignity of his departure—a sight that maddened.

"You send me to Uncle Horace because you want to get rid of me," she cried after him stingingly.

In spite of all that had passed, the

spoiled beauty expected denial of this charge. Her answer was a closing door. He was gone. Miss Lassiter, still bewildered, spoke out.

"Your husband said he would come for you this morning," she said, lifting a helpless hand to her forehead, settling her glasses in place, and turning uncertainly toward the door. "It's nearly lunch time, and he hasn't been here yet. Could—do you think anything's the matter? Why not send for him? I would if I were you. He'll make everything right for you. Do send for him, my dear."

Taking the other's silence for consent, the schoolmistress stole away. Clifford sat mute in the little room where she was left, looking about the familiar walls, with their gray-and-tan paper, large-figured, faded in patches, covered here and there by dreary steel engravings, and drearier colored pictures. She lacked even the stimulus of anger. The facility with which Julius Crittenden seemed suddenly rubbed out—erased—from her concerns was terrible

to her. It struck cold to her heart that it could be so. How feeble a thing must have been the bond which broke like that! Her mind cast back to other conquests and affairs of the heart. She required memory of them all now to salve her wounded vanity. But in this hour of her need could she go to one of her aforesaid admirers, and say: "I led you on to love me; I amused myself with your antics; now I myself am bereft and deserted. I need friends—will you be one?"

She was appalled. She longed unspeakably for a refuge; and inevitably Miss Lassiter's words, unheard at the time of speaking, came back to her. Sitting alone, her face reddened; her eyes, with a sort of fear in their depths, interrogated once more the dreary walls, the rain-washed windowpanes. Would it come to that? Must she send for the man who had married her and ask his protection? Despite her adventurous spirit, the thought held a disproportionate terror. Was she afraid of Heath, or of herself?

#### CHAPTER V.

He sat before a grate fire of soft coal, protest in every line of his tall, thin, aristocratic figure; in the folds of the dressing gown that drew sharply about his limbs. The dingy, second-rate hotel room abased itself before his presence, and looked dingier than ever in a bleared fashion. There was a rap at the door. "Come in," he called without turning his head.

Then the rustle of skirts apprised him of his visitor's sex, and he was instantly on his feet.

It was a charming woman who faced him, the expression of a personality tender and strong; but one instantly guessed that Annie Crittenden had all her life long been denied direct power, that she had learned to control her world by the patient, careful manipulation of trifles. This was shown even in the shock of greeting as her glance went swiftly, apprehensively to the tray on the small table at the man's elbow. Had he breakfasted well? Much depended on it.

"Annie—Annie—Annie!" he was saying over and over as he held her hand. "After all these years—Annie."

"What are we going to do about the children?"

She burst out, quite without premeditation, speaking evidently to relieve the tension of a situation which brought the blood to her cheek, and kept her eyes lowered.

He drew her toward a chair; but, after he had gently placed her in it, he remained standing, his left hand laid above the soft, ungloved fingers which he cherished in his right, looking down into her perturbed face with undisguised tenderness.

"My dear girl," he said at last softly, "what are we going to do about the children? The children have done the doing, it strikes me. Nothing is asked of us in an active way. As I understand it, we are merely called upon to ratify."

"You didn't think so when it was Julius," Mrs. Crittenden reminded him. "You put your foot down hard then. And I'm afraid this is worse. I'm afraid there's a great deal for—for somebody—to do. I looked to you, Horace, for some movement which should offer a solution to this dreadful business."

The major relinquished her hand, sat down, and continued to contemplate his visitor with deep satisfaction. All other thought seemed swallowed up in the fact of her being there, of her having appealed to him.

"Why do you call it dreadful?" he inquired. "Are you averse to the whole McFarland family?"

"You know I love Clifflie," the widow said. "I was delighted when there seemed a possibility of a marriage between her and Julius. And you, Horace—I was hurt, and angry at you for it—you opposed that."

"Julius resembled too much a man against whom I have held a grudge for a good many years." He looked meaningfully at the widow. "But Heath's your true son, Annie—he's tremendously like you. I might have regarded the matter differently had the first proposal come from Heath. As it is, he seems to me

the only thing worth saving in this business."

"Does that mean that you are drawing away from Cliffe, and not giving her the advice and help she needs now?" asked Mrs. Crittenden.

"She needs more than advice," said the old lawyer dryly. "She is entirely without funds."

The widow was silent a moment, plainly overwhelmed.

"Do you mean to say that she has nothing—nothing, Horace?" she protested haltingly at last. "Didn't her father leave her—I knew there was no money from her mother's side—but I thought her father was very rich at one time."

"So everybody else supposed. I didn't choose to advertise to the world how unfortunate his financial methods really were. I recognized that the estate was going to wind up in something worse than bankruptcy, and I paid Cliffe's mother an income. When the time came that I felt that I must talk it over with the woman, she was in her last illness; and when she was gone and I brought Cliffe home, it seemed scarcely worth while to explain to the child, or anybody else, that she wasn't an heiress. What difference did it make?"

"Of course—not any," agreed Mrs. Crittenden, in a bewildered voice.

"It's the supposition that she's my heiress that I wish to do away with now," the major rejoined briskly. "I'm not yet quite off the carpet myself, anyhow. I've done what I could for the girl—too much, it seems. I refuse to see this as any problem of mine. Let the strong man keep her—she's too much for me. Annie, you say you are tremendously fond of Cliffe; and you've got her for a daughter-in-law. Well, my dear, be content. We should stand free. I am hoping that circumstances will discipline her, since I've never been able to discipline her myself."

"Are you going to tell Cliffe that she has no money?" Mrs. Crittenden asked pitifully. "Are you going to tell her now—and let her see that she can't look to you for anything?"

"It was the only lever that I could

think of to pry her into a sound position," the major maintained. "I've written a letter, and sent it by your son Julius—"

"When?" cried Mrs. Crittenden, getting swiftly to her feet and turning toward the door. "Oh, my poor Cliffe! I must go to her."

The major bowed his old love out, the tips of her fingers touched his.

"You are going directly to Cliffe?" he asked wistfully.

"As straight as I can go," replied the widow.

And in twenty minutes she was mounting the stair in Miss Lassiter's school.

Mrs. Crittenden came into the room with a soft rush, caught Cliffe in her arms, and drew her to the sofa. For a long time the two sat side by side, embraced, the girl's face hidden on the older woman's breast. Both were trembling; and Cliffe finally reached down blindly, fumbling within the folds of her dress, seeking for a handkerchief, glad of the blessed relief of tears.

"Has he been here?" the mother made inquiry, in a hushed, shaken voice.

"Which one?" asked the girl.

"Julius. Heath promised me that he would make no attempt to see you until I had come. But Julius—did he give you that dreadful letter?"

For answer, Cliffe dragged out the crumpled sheets, and put them in the other's hand. Mrs. Crittenden let them fall as though they burned her.

"Isn't he cruel? Isn't he inhuman?" cried Cliffe.

Annie Crittenden's gentle breast was torn with conflicting emotions.

"You mustn't say that, dear," she begged.

"But he is," declared Cliffe vehemently.

"Dearie, girl," faltered her friend, "I—your uncle and I haven't been on speaking terms for many years. But I went to see him—for you—this morning."

"That was like you," murmured Cliffe.

"We—he said a great many things that— Well, I understand him as you

can not. Maybe you will some time. But now you'll just have to trust his love."

"His love!" echoed Cliffe stormily. "When he turns me out like a beggar!"

"Money's a dreadful thing to women," said the widow softly. "Maybe you know how I'm situated, Cliffe. Judge Crittenden was afraid I might give Heath a share in his estate, so he left everything to Julius. There's a clause in the will that recommends my son, Julius, to give me a maintenance—and that's all. I am dependent on Julius' pleasure."

"And you haven't a cent but what Julius chooses to give you!" Cliffe wondered. What brutes men were! "You could break a will like that," she added angrily.

Then she was suddenly aware that women of this sort do not break their husband's wills, and fell silent.

"If I had means, dear, we'd go away together—you and I—but we're a couple of dependents, Cliffe; and we'll have to take what the men are willing to allow us. I have been that all my life, and I'm not young any more. I used to be so glad that my girl was free, was independent. Even now I feel sure that your uncle will, in the end——"

"No, no!" cried Cliffe fiercely. "I want nothing from him. I'll have to think it over. There must be some way. My mother's people——"

She broke off, and sat looking down. Mrs. Crittenden's arm, about her, trembled. She studied Cliffe's face timidly. She must say a word for the outcast. That word must not be too little—she would try that it should not be too much.

"I have a curious feeling about all this, Cliffe," she said. "I see now that I must have been apprehending something of the sort from the first. Would you mind if I talk to you a little about Heath?"

It was wistfully spoken. Every line of the mother's face, every intonation of her rich voice, recalled that younger son.

"Say anything you want to," Cliffe breathed after a momentary hesitation.

"I don't come to plead his cause. You understand that, Cliffe?" the mother began. "I'm Julius' mother, too. I've no right to put a finger on your decision, or try to push you either way, but I do want you to understand."

"I want to understand," agreed Cliffe, in a very low tone, and after a considerable silence.

"Heath is like me—I suppose you've noticed that, Cliffe?" Mrs. Crittenden explained. "Julius resembles his father very much. The traits that Judge Crittenden admired in a wife were offensive to him in a son. Poor Heath! His father is dead now. I don't mean to complain of him when I say the child's life was made a hell from the day he was old enough to rebel against harsh authority—and he's a born rebel. He could defy his father before he could talk."

Tears gathered in the eyes that were like Heath's own for color; but they remained unshed as Mrs. Crittenden continued:

"It always seemed to the judge so unnecessary that Heath should want or do the things he did. They were mostly such things as were given or permitted to Julius without question. He did not realize the cruelty of being arbitrary with a boy like that in trivial matters; he couldn't understand that what my poor child was trying for was freedom—the power to choose, to have a thing of his own motion, and not because somebody else said he was to have it. I understood Heath always, because it's the same heart here." And she struck her fingers lightly against her breast.

The girl caught the fingers in her own, prisoning and holding them.

"Cliffe, I am going to say a dreadful thing to you," the older voice went on. "I really think I could have loved some other man better than my husband simply because he was not my husband. Do you know what I mean by that, dear girl? Oh, of course, you couldn't—a young creature like you."

"I know," murmured Cliffe. Mrs. Crittenden's tender naïveté always made her feel so unspeakably old and experienced.

"I don't mean that I ever did anything," the widow made haste to amend, "or ever in any way traversed my own ideals, nor those which I knew to be my husband's. Yet it was always there—the rebel that would have been glad to take the road, basket in hand, a free woman, between the hedgerows begging my bread, and making my choice of love. I have lived with that, and whether or no it got into my poor boy's disposition, it has given me an understanding of him and his needs."

It was dove and eagle with these two; the sure, savage sweep of Cliffe's pinions had always fascinated the older woman; and the girl was now touched and moved to know that in this gentle breast, too, there had been stirrings of rebellion, longings for the untried ether.

"Before Heath was out of grammar school there was a fearful quarrel, and he ran away," the mother's voice continued. "The West always calls such adventurous spirits as his. He never failed to write to me, Cliffe—and that says a great deal for a runaway boy living as he did. I know it was a clean life; anybody could tell that from his poor, misspelled letters—a child's letters. Oh, it seemed so hard that he could have none of the things Julius got so easily!"

She went on, unnoting that she had cheapened the older son for the younger:

"Oh, those awful years, when he was gone from me, and I couldn't know where nor to what? I didn't dare let



"Oh!" she whispered. "To feed me, and clothe me, and take me about—as though I'd been a beggar—and then taunt me with it! Oh!"

the judge see how my mind ran on Heath; but I was always picturing him, my baby, my turbulent boy; a tall man in the snows of the Klondike, or over in those hot places in the Philippines or Japan, and among those Indians out in the desert. He sent things to us. He offered out of his poverty, out of his poor, little earnings. He never failed to remember his brother's birthday, or mine. It's a generous nature—my poor Heath!"

Cliffe stirred uneasily. The mother recognized that the girl felt some demand was made upon her.

"When his father died, I wrote for him to come back and visit us, and he returned to me—what you see. He's got no education, my poor boy. He's



got no polish. He knows nothing of such women as you. It's only his mother that could be expected to—love him." She peered timidly into the vivid young face. "I'm not pleading with you for—for—I only want you, if possible, to understand the spirit of his action," she whispered faint-heartedly.

"Julius has been telling me that it was merely in a spirit of rivalry—to get ahead of him."

"Cliffie, are you blind?" Mrs. Crittenden caught the girl's shoulders, and turned her face to the light. "You've never had Heath about you and made such a mistake as to believe that?"

Cliffe reddened slowly under the other's humorous, ruthless gaze, and felt deceitful.

"I don't think Heath remembered that he had a brother, that there was such a man as Julius in the universe, when he saw his chance to steal you. Oh, my dear girl, it was painfully plain to his mother from the first how infatuated he was with you. I trembled for both of my boys then. You see, Heath's a good deal of a savage, dear. He's got fine qualities, and, with them, odd, childish streaks, and that life out in such queer places—well, he's—not quite civilized. When he wants a thing—dreadfully—as he wanted you, he knows no better than to snatch at it, to break through rules, and disregard the rights of others, and grasp what he loves, if he can get to it."

"What shall I do?" demanded Cliffe, her mind painfully on her own affairs.

Annie Crittenden's eyes glowed.

"Do!" she echoed. "Oh, my dearest! Of course you don't love Heath—" She broke off, harkening eagerly for denial. When none came, she went on: "I know that. I am not pleading with you to try to. But merely to have known you must rouse all that's best in a man like Heath. You'll wake his soul."

The girl looked into the widow's face with beautiful, uncomprehending eyes. One could have fancied how biting would have been Horace McFarland's regard turned on such a proposition, how he would have remonstrated: "My

dear Annie, the modern young woman is not trained to rouse souls in men; her aim seems to be mostly to rouse the beast in them. Beasts pay for their desires—souls only do great and beautiful deeds with which the youthful female of to-day has no apparent concern."

"I don't think so. I'm not the one," Cliffe demurred, drawing back from the other's embrace. "I couldn't."

The widow slipped from the sofa to her knees, her arms around the slim waist, her face hidden against the girl's lap.

"You are—you are," she insisted, with labored breath. "I've been talking to him. I've done all I can. You must see him again, Cliffe. You must show him the better way. Whether you ever could love him as a husband or not, remember he's an immortal soul. God made him—you're responsible for what becomes of him if you strike him a cruel blow now."

There was silence in the room. The rain's tattoo upon the panes sounded like importunate, signaling fingers; the wind went past outside asking for something. Cliffe's face, after the first shock of Mrs. Crittenden's unintentional accusation had subsided, looked white enough.

"I love you," she said finally, in a very low tone. "I'll do anything you ask me to do."

"Then see him again," begged the mother. "I make no demand on you. He won't come to you expecting anything. But—but please see him, dear."

This fell in so exactly with what Cliffe intended that it made her feel a wretch to allow it to appear a favor. Yet the mere present question of getting out of Miss Lassiter's way galled her unbearably. She had hoped momentary relief from Mrs. Crittenden, whom everybody regarded as a woman of large means. This now had failed.

"Will you send Heath to me?" she asked at the end of some rather painful cogitation.

"God bless you!" whispered the mother fervently, putting her arms about Cliffe in farewell. "I promise you that he'll not offend by presuming on

your goodness. I know you'll be all that's kind and gentle. I'll go right home now and send him."

Her sweet face was all alight. She turned at the door to assure Cliffe again that she expected nothing from the interview; but it was plain that she hoped all. If only Heath would be wise! She was tremulously impatient to get away, find her boy, and aid his simplicity with her wisdom. Cliffe kissed her once more, and closed the door after her.

She was gone. There was only the dingy room and the rainy day for consoling companionship. Cliffe looked with apprehensive eyes toward the future. Strike him? Why had his mother said that?

#### CHAPTER VI.

Mrs. Crittenden had not quite dared to bid her younger son come to the house which belonged to his brother, though it was her only home. They met in a little cottage built long ago upon the back street for an old servant of the Crittenden family. Mammy Aniky, who nursed Heath's infancy, had died in this house; and it stood yet untouched in the somewhat extensive grounds of the Crittenden mansion. His mother sent for him here, and he came in the rain, to find her waiting him in the bare, little room the old negress had left, cold, cheerless, its black fireplace yawning sootily at them.

She explained to him at length that Cliffe was not to be carried off in any such Cossack fashion as he had attempted; that it was brutal, humiliating to the girl, discrediting any true affection he might have for her. Before she was done, she had made it plain to a duller understanding than her son's that it was intolerable; not so much because of what he had done as of what he was.

"You needn't say any more," he admonished her as she repeated to him that he must not presume to approach Cliffe as a lover, much less as a husband. "Jule started to put me wise, but I wouldn't take it from him. One thing's sure: Cliffe wasn't in love with him. No—no—no! Don't be uneasy,

mother. I understand that she wasn't in love with me, either. Poor girl, to have a couple of brutes scrambling over her like hungry dogs over a bone!"

He took all the blame on himself, unaware that Cliffe and young women of her sort hold it flattering to be scrambled over. He tried hard to understand. His life had made it necessary for him to form the habit of swift judgment. He was able to contemplate his acquaintance with the girl, from the first luring glance to the blow which was the last he had had of her. He recognized, with shame which was an agony, what his persistent endearments must have been to her if his mother's estimate of the situation was the right one. In the torturing, white light of intuition, he knew, indelibly and forever, why Cliffe had struck him.

He was to go to her now, and offer whatever reparation she chose to demand, to be humbly glad that she would accept anything, meantime respecting this aversion of hers, which he knew better than his mother, which he saw must amount to hatred. He was never to trust her apparent good will—should she come to show such toward him. It seemed that civilized women act that way toward persons to whom they are indifferent—or worse. It was much for a boy of twenty-four to negotiate, a young fellow who had received no discipline save such as he chose to give himself; yet this latter had been of the sort that toughens the moral fiber. He came of good stock, and he faced the issue like a man, if not a hero.

"I say it for your good," his mother urged. "You didn't know what you were doing, but you must know now."

"I see where you're right, mother," he agreed huskily.

"She promised to receive you," Mrs. Crittenden reminded him. "I think she has some sort of plan in her mind. I felt that I must prepare you."

"Yes," he assented, in a heavy voice. "I'd rather be shot than go there and talk to her." With a fleeting glance at Mrs. Crittenden's distressed face, he ended contritely: "Nice thing for a man to say to his mother."

The woman made a swift, little murmur of forgiveness. His suffering touched her so deeply that she felt continually in danger of encouraging him too much.

"I deserve all I get," he summed the matter up. "Besides that, I've no right to choose what my punishment shall be. I'll go to her now, and whatever she says will have to be done."

Then the mother, remorseful at the sight of his bleached, boyish face, with the jaw square and the blue eyes, almost black, looking out at life with bleak courage, tried to unsay what she had said—and only branded it the more deeply.

"It isn't true, Heath," she cried, full of pride at the power of manhood in him. "Any girl might love you. You're just untrained. What you did was wrong—it was awful; but Cliffe will forgive you if you ask nothing of her, and remember always that she doesn't love you, and never did." She glanced up at him, and gasped: "Oh, Heath! Oh, Heath! I didn't say she never would love you—I didn't say that!"

He shivered, and loosened her embrace, putting her weight on one arm and away from him, so that he might speak to her with greater calmness and freedom.

"No, mother," he said soberly. "Don't you deceive yourself or me. She's never going to forgive me. She's got a right to hate me. I know some things about it that you don't."

He turned, and strode from her the length of the apartment. Heath's was an outdoor presence. He made the room seem small when he entered it; and this low-browed, dark, little hut was as a trap to some big, reckless, noble creature which had been taken in its own snare. Restlessly he went from window to door, stopped at the fireless hearth, and looked unseeing at the ashes and soot upon its stone.

"I believe I'm glad that, if she can't love me, she downright hates me," he said, almost in a whisper. "I couldn't bear to hang round her, taking a kind of half portion. I want to get away from her as far as I can." He glanced up

suddenly. He had spoken in a sort of low monotone, not looking at his mother. "That's the kind of crooked stick I am, mother. I wouldn't dare to say it to any one else; nobody but you would understand. You know I'd rather cut my throat than hang round her now. You see that it would be hell to look at her every day, and have her trying to—to be kind to me—God!"

Since the giving and the taking of that blow, Cliffe's one preoccupation had been to lose the memory of it—and to forget it she must forget Heath. She flinched from thought of him and it. Before her interview with Julius, before she had read her uncle's letter, she told herself that she would never see Heath's face again. Then as the passing hours brought the failure of prop after prop, she saw herself reduced to a point where she would have to rely upon her own strength or appeal to him, and she laid her qualms resolutely aside. She was the daughter of a line of politicians, efficient, forcible men, who had known how to make a point by forgetting offenses offered or received. It was strange enough to send for Heath. It was stranger to give the message to his mother. Yet this is what she was reduced at last to doing.

The hurried, darkened day, which was no day at all, struggled and clamored past her, straining and monstrous like a vision of the night. Julius came in the morning. Annie Crittenden was in the house when Miss Lassiter came to urge Cliffe to try to eat a bit of lunch. It was mid-afternoon, but with the grayness of twilight, when Heath answered her summons.

The habit of fascination was ingrained in Cliffe. It had become an instinct. She had dressed herself for this interview with the same care a soldier gives his arms before going into battle. She replaced Heath's ring on her finger; and those marvelous eyes of hers would be raised and lowered, flashed into his or veiled by their lashes, with the same study of effect which had marked her earlier interviews with him. She could converse with them in perfectly comprehensible terms; and

Heath's delusion had been that here truth lay. He was learning that at the bottom of those beautiful wells there was whatever Cliffe chose to put, whatever she felt would best serve her purpose.

She stood to receive him, wondering if he noticed the ring on her finger, acutely conscious that she had struck him in the face, and feeling that a certain amount of ardor on his part would make easier what she had to say.

She had almost no idea as to how she should meet him, since she could not in the least guess his present attitude toward her. She anticipated when she heard his step on the stair, when he crossed the hall and his hand was on the knob, that he might fling open the door, and strive to take her in his arms before a word was spoken. Almost she wished he would. It would justify her, give her something to oppose.

She was not prepared for the Heath Crittenden she saw, looking strangely taller because he was so pale, so immobile and constrained. The blue eyes were as direct as ever; but there was a look in them that had not been there before. They fixed themselves on her hungrily, and were instantly withdrawn when she returned the glance with one of kindness. They were alone in the room, save that there stood between them, like a visible presence, that blow she had given and he had received.

"I'm very glad you sent for me," he said.

"Should you never have come if I hadn't?" Cliffe asked, rather against her will.

Heath pondered that for a moment, then put it aside.

"I don't know that it matters," he said briefly. "I'm here."

"Sit down, please," the girl invited him. There was always a siren quality in Cliffe's tones, whether she would or no; something that made what she said less important than the voice that uttered it. "I've got—a great many things to say to you, I'm afraid. You see, it's necessary for me to make some move right away. Miss Lassiter is dreadfully worried. She used to consider it one

of the attractions of the school that she had me here. I think she would have liked to put it in the catalogues. I believe she did nearly always mention it in writing to patrons. But, of course, under these circumstances, she is very urgent to get me out of the house. She reminded me at the lunch table that the girls began coming back sometimes two or three days before school opens. She can't have me and my affairs all over the place. I've cost her enough in prestige already. She doesn't mean to be unkind—but—it's rather cutting when I have nowhere else on earth to go."

"I hoped that was what you sent for me about," Heath said, a note of relief in his tone; and she wondered at the plain practicality of this fiery wooer of the night before. "Tell me just what you'd rather have done, and I'll do it."

"First," Cliffe went on, "I must make you understand why I ask what I do. You ought to know what it is that narrows me down to this one plan. I talked to your mother. I can't go to her because she is your mother—and Julius'. I believe she's the only creature in the world that really wishes to have me."

A little shock went over Heath's countenance; but he offered no protest. She spoke again.

"It seems strange to have nobody want me; or, rather, to have everybody rather obviously turning their backs on me. I—I used to be considered rather a desirable person," trying to steady her tones. "There were so many folks who asked me to visit them; but I can't go with a thing like this hanging over me."

All of which meant to Heath money. He had been his own man for ten years, and he was used to regarding the joys and sorrows of life from the viewpoint of him who pays, even in that cruder existence where things were so much simpler. He was wondering if a lump sum would be needed here, and if so, what his share in the partnership back in Arizona would bring, and whether or not his partners, the Ballard brothers, would respond to a telegram. After all, the message would have to go into the desert by rail; there was no real hope of reaching them quickly.



*Miss Lassiter called guarded good-bys after them.*

Again she studied him with covert intentness. Even in the days when she had been at pains to charm him, she felt little comprehension of Heath. His actions continually surprised because his motives were obscure to her. Her Great-uncle Horace had spoken of him as an unusual man. Her Great-uncle Horace—there was the thing which choked her with rage and strangled her with futile self-pity. The feeling that he was try-

ing to push her toward Heath, the intolerable humiliation of remembering that the very flesh on her bones, as she told herself, was product of that food for which he had paid, that he dared tell her of it at this time. She was frantic whenever she thought of her Uncle Horace.

"I haven't a cent in the world," she broke out suddenly.

"The major told me," Heath returned quietly. "I—I hoped you'd—let me—maintain you. I didn't quite know how to offer it. Are you going to let me?"

"It's awful to have no money," the girl went on, ignoring his question. "And it's worse to remember that I've been a poor, silly beggar on horseback all these years, ordering things, and writing my foolish, little checks for things—that Horace McFarland paid for, and grudged me. I—oh, it seems to me I'd sell my soul for money enough to pay him back!"

A child's speech; but it brought home to the moneyless boy facing her his responsibility in the matter. She was welcome to what his soul would bring in the market, if it might cancel the debt for her. Then the red rose, blotting out his pallor, until his confusion was painful to witness, but the honest, direct eyes never left Cliffe's, as he said:

"I've got almost no money. I suppose you think that's an outrageous



thing for a man to admit who has—when he's done what I did last night. I didn't have sense enough to think about it then. Mother's been talking to me a good deal, and she's made me see that a girl like you—any good woman, of course, but certainly a girl like you—deserved not only to be courted and won in a proper way, but that I should have had something decent to offer you."

"Yes," breathed Cliffe, looking at him expectantly.

"You see, I'm used to living hard," he went on drearily, but resolutely. "I always made enough money for myself, and a little over. I supposed, of course, I could take care of a wife, just as I supposed that any woman that was my wife would love me, because I—forgive me, you understand I don't mean this personally—because I should love her so much."

The deep voice faltered into silence. For a moment Cliffe felt only regret that he had not been privileged to mean what he said "personally." She wanted to hear somebody say it—anybody. Poor, spoiled, petted child, shivering in this first chill putting from the door of Fortune, she was eager for a bit of comfort, starving for her customary food of adulation.

"I don't know a thing about money—Heath." She hesitated, at length bringing out the name with some apparent effort. "But have you got enough to go back to that place you were talking to me about, that night, you know, at the reception here, when we sat on the stairs, and you described the Painted Desert, and the queer village where the captive eagles sit on the flat roofs, and the strange dances are given—Oraibi, isn't it?"

"Yes," returned Heath.

She was sending him away. He wondered that it should be no farther than Oraibi.

Cliffe's lips were parted. Her breath came short, unevenly, between them. With another man, in a similar situation, she would have attempted here her usual tactics of lowered tones and swift, beguiling glances. But while she still

saw her power over Heath, these she knew had little effect on him. Her charm for this simple young male appeared to be something outside of her own efforts, something which she herself could not work at will, and with the primitive creature she was brought down to plainly make a plain demand.

"I mean, have you enough—to take me with you?"

It was out. She sat very still, looking straight ahead of her. For the first time in her dealing with anything masculine, she was afraid of the dynamic nature of the material she was handling.

"What?" he whispered incredulously, leaning forward to look more closely into her face. "Do you mean to go back with me? Would you do that?"

His aspect began to lighten, the grimness flooded out by a mounting glow that made his eyes shine. Yet the exultation was repressed, held well in hand. Almost he touched her, but not quite. This was yet another Heath, a different man from the one who had swept her into his arms at any or no opportunity, covered her face with kisses on the slightest provocation. She had to remind herself of his broken pleading, of the tender violence of his confident demand; and with it came tingling memory that she had struck him in the face for so presuming.

Now, apparently convinced of her aversion, for good and all, he watched her as a child watches the grown-ups whose language and methods of thought it cannot quite fathom. What she offered seemed to him all he desired—yet could a woman offer it with such a countenance? He would fain have spoken again, have questioned her further, but he was held dumb, helpless before the puzzle.

He had learned in a bitter school that he did not always know what Cliffe meant by what she said. He yet bled from the excoriations which memory, and his mother's words, had laid upon his awakening sensibilities. He dared not follow the prompting of his heart and catch her up in his arms, carry her about the room kissing her, shouting his triumph. He had a mad vision of it

for a moment, and a lightning flash of the pain which would follow. He was like a baby learning that the beautiful, bright thing may burn or cut.

Cliffe wrung her hands together in her lap, and the clumsy ring bruised her fingers. She glanced fleetingly at him, and nodded.

"It's the only plan I can think of," she said at length. "I was to have married Julius. That was to have settled my future; but you've——"

She broke off. The thing was hard to do. There rose within her a great need for justification. She wished she could forget Heath's face in the instant that she had struck him, all unaware that a physical buffet counts nothing beside the blow she was preparing. She went back to a recapitulation of her wrongs and difficulties.

"Your mother can't have me with her. I can't go round visiting people as some girls do, because I'm not a girl any more. Uncle Horace has turned me out. I can't stay here another day with any self-respect."

"You needn't say it," interrupted Heath. "I understand. I'm responsible for it all. What shall I do? What did you mean when you asked me if I had money enough to take you back to Oraibi with me?"

He was on his feet with that panther quickness that daunted her. She got up to face him, hands out, protesting.

"I didn't mean it that way. I couldn't. I couldn't—you know I couldn't! You've ruined my life, Heath Crittenden. I scarcely know you. I couldn't mean what you think. But if you'll take me West, to Oraibi, with you, as though I were—your sister. You owe me that much. I've nowhere else to go."

"Oh!" groaned the man, turning from her and crossing the room.

"It seems to me no more than fair." The girl's voice followed him. "I haven't been brought up to anything useful. I'll try to learn—something—that I could earn my living by—after a while. But just now I've got to get away from here—this—all of it."

"Yes," Heath managed to say at last

in a strangled voice. "I see. You're right. It isn't any more than fair."

There was a long silence in the room. Cliffe looked at his irresponsible back with those wonderful dark eyes that had troubled so many hearts in her short life. Somehow she could not adjust it. Was this she, Clifford McFarland, the adored, the sighed for, the siren disturber of men's peace, being accepted as a burden—almost as a punishment? Almost—Heath turned. She saw his wrung, despairing face, and knew that, given thus, she was to him as a punishment, and that he was debating as to whether it was not greater than he could bear.

And all because she wanted him to take her West as a sister—she whom he had desired as his wife. To her coquette's mind, her artificial point of view, the situation was not without its piquancies of power retained. At its worst, the bargain was all on her side, since it gave her the security of a strong, beautiful mate, without risking anything which is usually paid for such security. How was she to guess the simple, primitive emotions which rendered the arrangement well-nigh insupportable to Heath?

"But not Oraibi," he protested, coming back to stand and look down at her as though he did not see her. His voice labored. "It's no place for you. Let me send money to—anywhere else you choose. I'll be glad to do it. I've got a lot of stuff with my partners back there in the Hopi country, stuff brought from the Klondike, and some things I picked up in the islands. I had a liking for gems, and I've had luck in buying them. Dave—my partner—understands that sort of thing, and he deals with the Rothschilds direct. He was going to sell 'em for me. I'll get some money together, and you could live anywhere you chose."

His look became entreating. Her proposition that they should each accept the other as a sort of penance seemed to this natural man a monstrous one.

"Why not Oraibi?" The question came after she had thought for some time.

"It's—it's dirty, and there's nobody there but a lot of savages. You wouldn't like it."

"But you liked it," she objected. "I enjoyed hearing you tell about it."

He shook his head.

"I like all sorts of places that would be too rough for you. Don't look at me that way. Yes—yes—of course. I should have known it before—I should have known it."

"You lived in Oraibi, and you told me that you thought the desert the most fascinating country you had ever seen, and now you say you won't take me there when I want to go?" Cliffe put the question at some length. "I think it's very strange."

"You don't understand." The young fellow constrained himself to patience, but his quiet voice had the pant of rising revolt in it. "I'll take you—I suppose I will—unless I can make you see it would be a great deal better for you to stay somewhere here in Kentucky, or maybe in St. Louis or Kansas City. Those are good towns. I'll have to pass through both as I go out. Why can't I find a place for you in one of them, and leave you there?"

His unwillingness to have her with him, a thing she had incredulously suspected all along, was too apparent now for any question. She dropped her hands at her sides as she stood up and faced him with bent head, her eyes upon the floor.

"You'll have to take me away from here—now," she said doggedly. "My trunk's at the station. Most of my things are in it. I want to go to-night, on the train we would—I want to go to-night."

There was no attempt to amend the matter, to get on a better basis of feeling or companionship. Cliffe was used, as Heath had been, to laying strong hands on what she desired.

"I'll come for you at ten-thirty," he said at length, making no demur, no statement in regard to the shipping of the mare, the numerous uncompleted

items of business which he would have to attend to before that hour. "I'll try to do the right thing," he added. "Of course, you might consider that there isn't any right thing for me to do now, but I'll try to come up to what you ask."

She stopped him at the door.

"I wish you wouldn't tell anybody of our going—not even your mother," she cautioned him feverishly. "I don't want to say good-by to—anybody. I just want to get away."

And so it was that their departure wore the countenance of an elopement, almost as the journey of the other evening had done. Only Miss Lassiter waited in the hall to see them off. Then it was found that the front door had been locked for the night, and something had gone wrong with the key.

"Just come in through my study," the schoolmistress said nervously, anxious to lend the occasion some warmth it lacked.

"Thank you, Miss Lassiter," said Heath. "You've been very kind."

Cliffe, acutely aware that her traveling dress proclaimed bride from every impeccable fold, having in her pocket a note from her Uncle Horace which applauded her decision to go with Heath, thrown into a numbness of rage by wonder as to how he had learned of it, and reflection on the satisfaction which she knew her step would afford everybody concerned—except herself and poor Heath—made short work of her adieus.

They passed through the French window. Miss Lassiter called guarded good-bys after them. Tillie lurked behind her with an old satin slipper to throw for luck—and then was afraid to cast it.

Heath had stood back for Cliffe to precede him across the threshold. He did not immediately rejoin her outside; but the two descended the porch steps and moved down the walk, Cliffe a pace or two in advance, Heath following. His head was bent, and his broad shoulders drooped, as though they sagged beneath a dead weight.

## ON POMPOUSNESS

By Charles Battell Loomis

**A**RE you pompous?

Wish you'd let us come and watch you being pompous some time when you haven't any others around. A pompous man is the funniest sight on earth.

They used to wear side whiskers, and some of them still do, but now that it seems to be the idea that it isn't worth while having a razor unless you make it clean your whole face, lots of pompous men are smooth-shaven.

I hope that if you are pompous you will have married a woman with a sense of humor. A pompous man married to a humorless woman—well, divorces have resulted.

Your pompous man has little sense of humor or his pomposity would slip out through a wide grin, the first time he saw himself in the glass.

I once knew a bishop who was pompous. I was a small child then, but I called him the eggplant. He looked like one. An eggplant is a funny vegetable, but no funnier than he was. As he walked into the chancel, bursting with pomposity, it probably never occurred to him that the pale-faced child in the gallery thought he looked more like an eggplant than anything else. An eggplant has little real dignity, and a pompous man has no more real dignity than an eggplant. Real dignity generally has an injection of humor in it that saves it from becoming pomposity.

A dignified man can stand on his head to amuse his grandchildren without losing dignity. A pompous man would sooner die than stand on his head even for his great-grandchildren.

When I was a boy I used to think that bankers were the pompousest men, but since I've grown up I've met a lot of bankers who were just like ordinary men. Perhaps if I knew that bishop now I'd find that he was not really pompous.

I believe that if it had not been for that bishop I would not have known what pomposity is, but he crystallized the quality to me, and ever since then I've been able to recognize it, and it has given me merry hours.

Short men are more apt to be pompous than are tall men. When a man is short he feels that he must assert himself, and when he asserts himself long enough and believes his own assertion, he becomes pompous, and then he stirs up healthy laughter in humorous minds, and if his wife has a sense of humor she enjoys him and discounts his pomposity.

But be sure that you marry a woman who will be able to laugh at you, pompous man, or else the divorce courts for you.

And let us come and watch you pomp, soon.



# Mrs. Fahrendell's Musical

BY

MARION SHORT

Author of

"The Famous Cochran Children,"

"Company for Dinner,"

"J. Hodge Fodge," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. C. CASWELL

VERDANT stepped into the yellow taxi and reached back for her violin. Her father stooped, and placed it carefully in her hands. Mrs. Cochran, following, halted in the middle of the sidewalk to gaze anxiously up and down the street.

"Come on, ma!" called the little violinist. "What are you waiting for?"

"It makes me dreadful uneasy, startin' off in this taxi, when they promised to send a carriage for us." Even after she was seated Mother Cochran held the cab door ajar uncertainly. "Maybe we'd ought to wait a while longer for it yet, pa?"

The professor shook his head.

"They've made a mistake in the address—that must be it. You're doing the sensible thing to start now. If they should show up, after all, I'll tell them you waited a full hour."

Mrs. Cochran leaned back with a sigh, acquiescent but still doubtful.

"Well, if that's your judgment, pa. Reach over here, Verdant, and stick your head out of the door to look up at

Fern. She's wavin' to us from the window. Good gracious, I wish the young one wouldn't lean out so far!"

Verdant's head showed itself for a minute across her mother's lap, and Fern got one more longed-for glimpse of the new turquoise cape she was wearing over her white dress.

As Verdant's hand ceased its responses to the signals of her sandy-haired sister on the fourth floor, Mr. Cochran took it affectionately in his own.

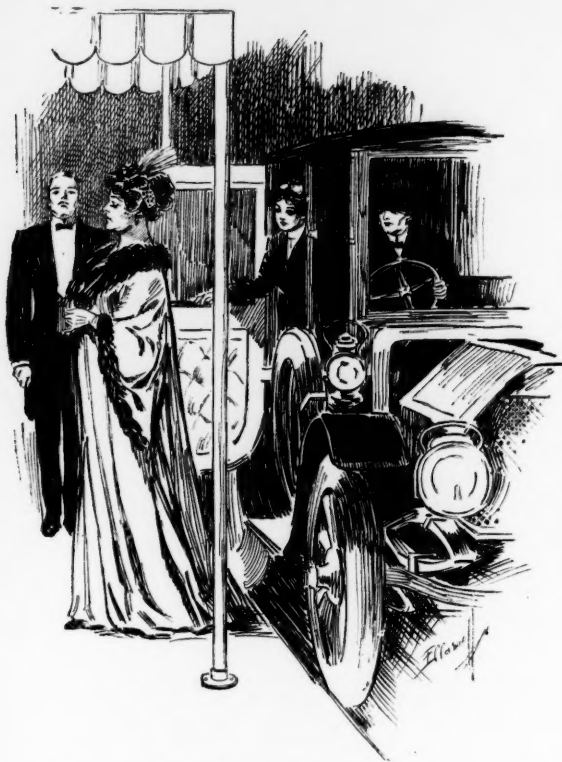
"Father's sorry they didn't engage him to play for his little girl to-night. But you'll keep your nerve, and show them that you can do just as well with that big, foreign accompanist as you could with me. Won't you, dear?"

Verdant nodded with complete assurance, then gave him a darting, birdlike kiss.

"But I'd rather have my own dear pa, just the same!"

Once well on their way, Mrs. Cochran's naturally buoyant spirits reas-





*A stout lady bloomed out of the door, like a huge pink flower, covered with glittering dewdrops.*

serted themselves. She unbuttoned the top button of her coat and took a deep breath.

"There's one thing certain, Verdant. It can't take us long to get there, speedin' like this, with the houses slidin' past us like a movin' picture. And even if we should be a little late, it's such a stylish affair I don't reckon they'll begin right on the minute, anyhow. Be that as it may, I'm through worryin' over it."

As the taxi rounded to a standstill, Verdant peered out with wide, curious eyes.

"Oh, ma, look! They've got an awning out, like for a wedding! And a red

velvet carpet up the steps, too! Isn't it just grand?" She shrank back in the corner of the seat in sudden panic, clutching the violin to her breast. "Oh, suppose I shouldn't do as well as Mrs. Fahrendell expects me to!"

Her mother turned quickly, and, taking her by the shoulder, gave her a little, reproving shake.

"Sakes alive, what ails you, child? You mustn't think that just because you've got to be a professional, since your debut concert at McFadden's, that that's goin' to allow you to begin gettin' nervous. If you do, it will just spoil your playin'—that's all! Why, what on earth is there to get scared about?"

She dropped Verdant's music roll, and picked it up again.

"You're too young to have nerves, anyhow. It's bad enough for older folks. You

jump out first, and be sure and don't catch your dress on anything! I'll hold your violin."

The taxi darted away from the curb, and a limousine car slid noiselessly into its place. Immediately a stout lady bloomed out of the door, like a huge pink flower, covered with glittering dewdrops and emanating a heavy Oriental perfume.

Instinctively Verdant and her mother drew back against the side of the awning to let her pass. A chattering French maid hopped from the car, and, running after her mistress, replaced the opera wrap which was falling away from the bare, pink shoulders.

Slowly Mrs. Cochran and the young violinist trailed up the velvet carpet after them, feeling much cast in the shade.

"Madame Loisetete Lalage."

As the butler announced the name of the gorgeous vision, Verdant gave an exclamation of awed delight. She had never before been nearer to an opera singer than the back row in the top balcony of the Metropolitan Opera House; and here she was standing not three feet distant from a great and famous one! She could actually reach out her hand and touch her if she wished; could see the quiver of the towering aigret in her hair; and even detect a small, brown mole on the side of her chin! It was too wonderful to be true!

The hostess of the evening advanced to meet the new arrival, and greeted her with much effusiveness, giving her the prevailing fashionable handshake, with its marked appearance of cordiality and its utter absence of same.

"So sweet of you to come to me on short notice like this! You see, as I explained to your representative—Mr. Steiner—I intended giving only an informal home affair; but when we found this morning that Baron Rogniat could come—he is considered quite the foremost unprofessional critic in Berlin, you know—I knew I should be in disgrace with him if I did not secure the most charming feature available for my evening."

With her jeweled fan she tapped an accent of her adroit flattery on the plump arm of the prima donna.

Madame Loisetete Lalage, with many foreign gestures, and much rolling of heavily penciled eyes, volubly expressed her appreciation of Madame Fahren-dell's kind compliments. It would, indeed, be a pleasure—a grrreat pleasure—to sing for Madame Fahren-dell; but she—Madame Lalage—*Mon Dieu*, this terrible American climate! One day like this, another like that! The poor songbird with the sensitive throat—ah, one could sing in France or Italy forever, and not have such a throat, such a frrrrrightful cold! Yet—rather than disappoint—

She shrugged her magnificent shoulders in a manner indicating that her consent to sing implied, on her part, nothing less than sublime self-sacrifice.

It was not until she, with her maid, had passed upstairs to a specially reserved dressing room that Mrs. Fahren-dell's glance fell upon the Cochrans—mother and daughter—waiting unostentatiously in the background. A slight, almost imperceptible, shiver ran over her, such as might seize on one who, in a warm room, suddenly experiences an icy current of air playing at the base of one's neck.

"The carriage did not call for us," explained Mrs. Cochran, stepping forward with a hesitating smile, "so I took the responsibility—that is, the professor did—of hirin' a taxi."

"Of course the carriage did not call," interrupted Mrs. Fahren-dell sharply. Her look of surprise had changed to one of distinct annoyance. "It did not call because I——" She hesitated, biting her lip. "That is," she concluded enigmatically, "I fear my telegram must have failed to reach you."

Mrs. Cochran's hands suddenly turned cold.

"What telegram, Mrs. Fahren-dell? You—you sent some word to us about the carriage?"

Before the direct, honest questioning of Mrs. Cochran's look, Mrs. Fahren-dell's own eyes wavered, and fell.

"Ye-es," she stammered. "Partly about the carriage. But—well, never mind—it makes no difference now."

She turned toward the butler, a frown creasing her smooth, white forehead.

"James, you may show this lady and the little girl—err—let me see. I hardly know—oh, downstairs to the billiard room. Yes, they can wait down there." As the butler advanced to do her bidding, a stinging note of reproof crept into her level speech. "You did not get off that telegram in time, after all. When I had expressly told you how important it was."

Somewhat dazed from their strange reception, mother and daughter followed the speechless and inscrutable

James to a big, uninviting room below, containing racked cues and a shrouded billiard table.

"But why not let the child play now that she is here?" The suggestion came from Mr. Fahrendell as his wife hastily explained to him her predicament.

"Because it's utterly impossible! She's just a little amateur, Chester, whom I engaged to fill in before we knew Baron Rogniat was in town. I simply don't dare to have her on the program with him in the audience, and with such an artist as Madame Lalage! Oh, I could wring James' neck!"

One of the fragile, ivory sticks of her fan snapped in two at the indignant pinch of her fingers.

"Well, then, why didn't you let them know at once—soon as they got here—that their services were not needed?"

"Oh, that sounds easy enough! But if you had ever seen the way that mother looked at me!"

They were in the library, and she flung herself impatiently into a massive leather chair.

Mr. Fahrendell was a business man who believed in disposing of everything—business and social—in an entirely businesslike way.

"It's a perfectly simple situation," he averred, carefully adjusting a pearl stud that had worked loose. "All you have to do is to go to them with the money in your hand—money talks—and tell them that you find your program is a trifle too long, but that you stand ready to compensate them just the same. That will fix it in a minute. They'll consider themselves in luck to be paid for doing nothing."

Mrs. Fahrendell arose, comforted and reassured. It took a man to see the way out of disagreeable situations, after all, especially if they had anything to do with money. It would never have occurred to her to offer them an unearned fee. And she really did not wish to be unkind to the poor things! She prided herself on being rather gracious to "poor things," as a rule, except when they were inconsiderate enough to become obstacles in one's social pathway.

Then it was really too much to expect of one!

Her affability restored, she greeted the first guest to arrive—Baron Rogniat, as it happened—with sparkling cordiality.

"So glad you are early, baron. Yet I quite tremble at your presence. It's to be such a modest, little musicale, and you have such uncompromising standards."

As the distinguished guest bowed over her hand in his courtly way, she remembered her latest musical acquisition, and exulted.

"Yet it may not be so dreadful, after all," she hinted mysteriously, "for I have a little surprise for you, secured only at the eleventh hour."

Coming up behind his wife, Mr. Fahrendell gave her elbow a warning pressure. They had mutually agreed that the appearance of Madame Lalage should be a complete surprise to every one, and especially to the baron; and Mrs. Fahrendell was, as usual, on the point of divulging the very thing they had vowed to keep secret. It was a failing of hers.

Taking no further chances, Mr. Fahrendell linked his arm through the baron's, and carried him off to the library for a smoke.

"Wasn't that a knock at the door, ma?"

Verdant, divested of her wraps, was standing by the radiator warming her hands. Mrs. Cochran was unbuckling the music roll.

Straightway blond Mrs. Fahrendell turned the knob and silkenly rustled toward them, a condescending smile on her lips.

"Mrs. Cochran," she began, very sweetly, "we might just as well be frank with each other, mightn't we?"

"Concerning what?"

There was a disconcerting simplicity about Mrs. Cochran.

"Wh-why, concerning that telegram I sent you. You see, at the last moment I decided to secure Madame Lalage—you heard me explaining it to her when she arrived, doubtless—and the change

of plans has made my program so long, so ridiculously overcrowded, that—as I said in the telegram James neglected to send——”

Catching a warning look in Mrs. Cochran's clear brown eyes, she suddenly stopped short.

“Verdant's dropped one of her gloves somewhere,” announced Verdant's mother, with slow deliberation. “Maybe in the hall. You and I can talk out there as well as we can in here, Mrs. Fahren-dell, and perhaps I'll find it.”

She went straight out of the room,

be a great injustice to her to have her appear at all. That's what I said—virtually—in the telegram.”

“You mean by that,” said Mrs. Cochran, with complete understanding, “that your telegram called Verdant's engagement off at the very last minute, *only* we didn't happen to get it.”

“Yes, that's what I mean.”

At least Mrs. Cochran was not dense—she was glad of that. Explanations like this were far from agreeable, however quickly grasped.

“Of course, I'm perfectly willing to



*The exquisite and world-renowned high note suddenly telescoped itself into a brief, discordant squeak.*

and, as Mrs. Fahren-dell perforce followed her, closed the door carefully behind them.

“I didn't want Verdant to overhear if it was anything that might upset her,” she explained, lowering her voice. “She's a sensitive child, and we try to shield her all we can when she's preparin' to face an audience.”

Mrs. Fahren-dell made an effort to appear disarmingly friendly.

“Yes, she's such a nice, little thing, your daughter. But now that I have engaged Madame Lalage, her violin solo would come so late in the evening, so very late, you know—I'm absurdly overcrowded—and I feel that it would

pay your daughter, anyhow,” she went on effusively, “and James will see that you are sent home comfortably at once.”

She tried to press a folded check into Mrs. Cochran's hand, but found her effort resisted.

“Why, you surely can't object,” she inquired, in dismay, “so long as the fee is paid just the same as if the child had played?”

Again she tried to bestow the gratuitous check, and again it was refused.

“Yes, but I do object, Mrs. Fahren-dell; not on my own account so much, but on Verdant's. She's looked forward to this engagement for a month, prac-

ticed for it, told folks about it, set her heart on makin' a success. It's meant one rung higher in the ladder to her. You hain't heard anything against her, have you?"

"Of course not, Mrs. Cochran. They told me she pleased every one at Mrs. Granger's whist. That has nothing to do with it. But I really must shorten my program somehow—that's why she can't appear."

"She's got to appear, Mrs. Fahrendell."

Had she heard aright? Mrs. Fahrendell stared at Mrs. Cochran with an amazement so complete that it was almost ludicrous. Her well-bred mouth fell open like a gaping schoolboy's.

"You can't go back on her now," continued the young violinist's champion, pale but determined. "I ain't goin' to allow you to."

"But the money," gasped Mrs. Fahrendell, clinging insistently to the idea her husband had suggested. "When I offer you the money—"

"She don't want the money without she plays, nor if she plays, unless you're satisfied she's earned it. But—you can't turn away my little girl like she was unworthy. I wouldn't have her hurt like that, her innocent pride in herself humbled and crushed out of her like that, not for all the money you could offer, Mrs. Fahrendell." Her voice shook. "Not for all the money in New York."

This was not only awkward, but painful. Speech failed Mrs. Fahrendell completely. She had always regarded "professionals" as amiable, and occasionally likable marionettes, who responded entertainingly to the pulling of certain strings; and the discovery that they permitted themselves to indulge in pride and sensitiveness, like the people who patronized them, was a distinct shock to her.

Verdant's glove was lying at the foot of the stairs. Mrs. Cochran walked over and picked it up. Gradually Mrs. Fahrendell regained her self-control.

"Very well, Mrs. Cochran, since you feel that way about it," she said faintly, at last. "But it will have to be very late

—perhaps the last thing on the program."

Mrs. Cochran bowed a formal consent, and made room for Mrs. Fahrendell to pass.

"I'll tell Verdant it'll have to be late."

Halfway across the polished floor of her music room, Mrs. Fahrendell stopped short and clenched her fists. Here she was being compelled against her will to have that obscure young one play before the baron! And why, after all, should she be forced into submission by any one so exceedingly commonplace as that dumpy, little Mrs. Cochran person, with her absurd, dumpy dignity?

As she agitatedly rearranged the American Beauties in the single, tall vase that stood on the music cabinet, her indignant reflections focused themselves into a resolve. She would proceed with her program just as intended, omitting the violin solo of Miss Verdant Cochran, and, after it was all over, she would have James go down to the billiard room—oh, she would not again face that stubborn mother individual, not for the world; but James should do so—and inform her that, to Mrs. Fahrendell's regret, she had entirely forgotten the presence of the little violinist until the musicale was ended, and that now, as the guests were leaving, she would not be required to play.

Lifting her head, she smiled, relieved and triumphant. After all, it is pleasant to have one's own way about things, especially if it has become a sort of habit with one.

Mrs. Cochran, sitting quietly in the room below, was remembering, too, every syllable of the verbal tilt that had taken place between Verdant's unwilling patroness and herself. She had stood up for Verdant, and Verdant was going to play—but under protest. That thought was gall and wormwood to the proud and tender mother heart.

"What are you sighing about, ma?" The child looked up from a sheet of music she had been scanning with





*"A child!" exclaimed the baron, in amazement. "An artist like that! And only a child!"*

studious eyes. "You act so worried, somehow."

Mrs. Cochran's attention seemed suddenly attracted to a picture on the wall—a picture of red-coated hunters riding to hounds. She crossed over and stood gazing up at it, her back to Verdant.

"Hope your pa won't forget to have some raw oysters and ginger ale ready to set out for you when you get home. You hain't scarcely eat a bite to-day."

Verdant took up her music again.

"Because I wasn't hungry. I never am hungry when there's a concert ahead, until I've played and got it off my mind. Then I could just eat up the house, if you'd let me. Oh, I wish I could go over this last movement of the concerto—just once! With the mute, so no one would hear."

Abandoning the red-coated hunters, Mrs. Cochran resumed her seat.

"You don't need to. Your pa said

you played it as if you had known it all your life."

"What were you and Mrs. Fahrendell talking about when you went out and shut the door?"

"H'm! No use tellin' it over. You won't be called on to perform 'til pretty late in the evenin'. That's the most it amounted to." She managed to force a smile. "Think your dress is goin' to feel more comfortable for your bowin' since I cut it out larger in the armholes?"

To test the matter, Verdant arose and made windmill movements with her arms.

"Umhm! It doesn't bind a bit now." She went over and leaned against her mother's shoulder. "Wasn't that a lovely green satin Mrs. Fahrendell had on?"

"I didn't notice; but I reckon 'twas."

"Isn't she lovely, anyhow?" The little girl's accents were both admiring and envious. "She has the deepest dimples

I ever saw. I've only got one, and my face is so thin that it looks more like a crack than a dimple."

"Don't run yourself down, Verdant. We've got to be satisfied with the way the good Lord made us."

"She didn't notice me much; but I like her, somehow. Don't you, ma?"

As always, Mrs. Cochran tried to be just.

"I reckon she's got a likable side to her. They say every one has, if we only try hard enough to find it."

Suddenly Verdant bounded to the middle of the room, and turned with clasped hands.

"They've begun! What a splendid piano! It sounds like a whole big orchestra! Oh, if I could only go over that last movement—just once!"

The program proceeded smoothly from the very first. The lesser celebrities acquitted themselves with credit; and the entrance of the roseate luminary from the stellar ranks of the Metropolitan created the anticipated sensation. There were surprised murmurs, exclamations of delight, welcoming applause.

Mrs. Fahrendell fanned herself languidly, as if the engaging of a thousand-dollar prima donna was quite an everyday occurrence with her. Indeed, why should it not be? Her husband was a multimillionaire, fond of sensational achievement both in public and in private life.

Toward the close of the grand aria, she observed with surprise that an unmistakable hoarseness was marring the lyric quality madame's admirers were wont to designate as "cream," "velvet," and the like. The prima donna had complained of a cold, true; but these public singers always did complain of a cold, and she had passed over Madame Lalage's remarks as being merely the usual ones.

Horrors! The exquisite and world-renowned high note the prima donna had been approaching, and toward which her audience had soared with her in spirit, suddenly telescoped itself into a brief, discordant squeak. The terrible American climate of which

madame had complained had asserted itself with a vengeance.

Mrs. Fahrendell sat stunned. She could scarcely believe her senses. To pay a thousand dollars to a singer, only to have her produce at the last a high note like a broken whistle? No, such a calamity, such an indignity could not occur under her auspices, and with the baron present—it simply could not. But it had.

The intermission well under way, Mrs. Fahrendell glanced about anxiously for the baron. Would he honor her musicale with the stamp of his critical approval, despite madame's mishap, or would he withhold the repeatable praises she had so longed to hear? From group to group of pleasantly congratulatory guests she passed in search of him. He seemed to be nowhere in sight, and her husband had vanished also. Finally it occurred to her that they might be in the library indulging in another smoke.

As she went by the stairway that led to the billiard room, she paused rigidly. Yes, it was, it really was, the muffled sound of a violin! Why should she be reminded at this exasperating moment that those Cochran people were still to be disposed of? Her irritated nerves cried out for relief. Well, they should be disposed of, and at once!

At the foot of the stairs she collided squarely with Baron Rogniat.

"Baron!" she gasped, her heart sinking. "Oh, whatever brought you here?"

She would have passed him but for the warning uplift of his hand.

"Listen!" he whispered.

Verdant, all unconscious of auditors, was practicing the final movement of the concerto. Her playing was somewhat deadened by the mute, but all its nuances clearly distinguishable—every nerve of her vibrant, little body keenly alive to the task.

"Mark the delicacy of that phrasing!" The baron spoke disjointedly, in an enthusiastic undertone. "Such technique—temperament! Tremendously difficult—that passage—but—you'd never know it—would you? It goes—as

easy as a nursery rhyme! Nothing—I have heard—this side—has so impressed me!"

Just then Mrs. Cochran, feeling the need of ventilation, flung open the door.

Completely absorbed in her music, they beheld Verdant, looking like a little white angel, her eyes cast dreamily upward, the violin at her shoulder, the bow poised for a downward stroke.

"A child!" exclaimed the baron, in amazement. "An artist like that! And only a child!"

Mrs. Fahrendell prided herself on being a society diplomat, and she took her cue instantly. Turning upon the baron with a radiant, deep-dimpled smile, she

shook her finger at him in mock reproach.

"I told you I had a surprise for you, baron. But you have anticipated me by discovering it for yourself, you naughty, naughty man!"

Interestedly the baron proceeded to engage the shy but pleased little Verdant in conversation, while Mrs. Fahrendell crossed over to the astonished Mrs. Cochran.

"Dear Mrs. Cochran, I want your wonderful little daughter to appear next, if you please. Immediately after the intermission, if you don't mind, Mrs. Cochran. I've been saving her for the baron."



### A Summer Night

THE night's black mantle foldless lies,  
Sewn through with silver spangles gay;  
White Venus rules the filmy skies  
At the world's rim in regal way.  
The fallow sun she dispossessed  
Has left his throne room in the west,  
And, Sweet, this soft dark night is best!

For tender tales it is the time—

Soft words that lovers love to tell;  
For threading beads of careless rhyme;  
For hearing small wood voices well.  
Yet 'tis not always night, my Sweet!  
The day dawns quick with foes to meet  
And hard, proud victories at our feet!

JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING.



## A Matter of Pedigree

By Joseph Ivers Lawrence

ILLUSTRATED BY SIGURD SCHOU

GOSSET, in his master's modest livery of black and maroon, moved about the bachelor chambers in The Axminster on Copley Square as quietly and methodically as a venerable mouse. He was alone, but he gathered no assurance from the solitude; his demeanor was one of unremitting servility, unaffected by light or darkness, and he treated the very furniture of the apartment with something of a sacerdotal gravity.

He placed the tea things upon the table reverently, drew down the window shades, and lighted the lamp.

A door slammed, and steps sounded in the entrance hall. Gosset's smug, chop-whiskered face lighted up with a sudden glory of genuine, ingenuous pleasure. In an instant he controlled the unbecoming emotion, and stood by the tea table as decorous as a graven image when his master, Douglas Crewe Gore, burst in like an energetic school-boy, and threw his topcoat into his arms.

"It's been a rare day, Gosset," he said cheerily. "By Jove, I'm hungry! I thought I'd find the ladies here."

"Yes, sir, a rare day, as you say, sir," responded the valet, changing countenance only as much as was necessary to natural articulation. "The tea is ready, sir. Shall I serve it before the ladies arrive?"

"Why, no. I'll wait," answered the master. "I dare say they'll be here directly. I've been talking all day, you know, Gosset—talking, talking—on my

feet most of the time; yet I'm feeling quite fit. A cup of tea will set me right."

"Yes, sir. Quite so, sir," said the valet, awed almost into confusion by the condescension of his master. And then, on sudden impulse, but with a look of pain in the realization of his own temerity, he added:

"Begging your pardon, sir, I took the liberty of reading the *Transcript* after my morning work was done, and I had the pleasure of reading your speech of yesterday, sir."

"Ah, did you?" murmured Gore absently, as he dropped into a chair by the fire and lighted a cigarette. "Well, what did you think of it, Gosset? Come, now, no flattery! What sort of a speech was it—man to man?"

The valet flushed, and grew agitated.

"If you please, sir, I read it with much interest," he asserted earnestly. "And I'm not very keen on politics, you know, sir. But you put everything so clearly, sir; it made the—the municipal-ownership plan quite plain to me. Only the other evening, when you very kindly allowed me to go out, sir, I was talking with some gentlemen's men about that very matter, and Mr. Dawkins—he's Judge Apsley's man, sir—said as his master dropped a word to Senator Kelvin, in his 'earing, about you having the—the key to the situation, sir; and as how you were one of the coming men in the State, and outside of it as well, sir. My word! When I read that

speech, I says to myself: 'I'd like to hear what Judge Apsley has to say to that. And not only him, but the governor, too.' I says it to myself, out loud, all alone here. I was so took up with the speech, sir, and I——"

Gosset paused suddenly, and looked into his master's amused face with a rising horror.

"Oh, sir; I beg pardon, sir!" he pleaded miserably. "I let my feelings get away with me, sir. I didn't mean to talk so much——"

Douglas Gore burst into hearty laughter.

"Don't feel so cut up about it, Gosset," he said kindly. "You're a good fellow, Gosset. You make me positively vain. Almost I think this is one case in which a man is something of a hero to his valet. Take care you don't spoil me. Really, I'm gratified that you liked the speech. I'm talking for the people, and I want to know what the people think of me."

The bell at the door interrupted the conversation, and the valet hastened to respond to it.

"Mrs. Gainsford and Miss Eldon," he announced a moment later; and a lovely young girl swept into the room in a swirl of silks and furs, followed by a slightly asthmatic, elderly woman, with a fleshy, friendly countenance.

Douglas Gore leaped out of his chair, caught the girl in his arms with boyish frankness, and kissed her; then turned, and saluted the older woman upon her wrinkled cheek.

"Oh, aunt and I are famished, Douglas!" cried the girl. "We've been hours

getting here, and it's almost late for tea, isn't it?"

"Lose no time, Gosset," ordered the young man. "Boil some fresh water and get some more muffins. We shall need a lot of them, I fancy."

"I say, have you read my speech, Mary?" he demanded, with youthful eagerness, as he forced the two women into easy-chairs before the fire.



*He placed the tea things upon the table, and lighted the lamp.*

"Who hasn't?" returned the girl, with equal enthusiasm. "Really, Douglas, I was almost jealous this afternoon—the things people are saying of you, you know; one would think they quite owned you. I felt rather de trop at Mrs. Ainsworth's. They all knew such a lot about you, and I know so little of politics. I got quite desperate, and told them what a bully game of tennis you can play, and they laughed at me horribly."





*Douglas Gore caught the girl in his arms with boyish frankness, and kissed her.*

"Never mind, dear," laughed Gore. "I'd much rather you knew more of tennis than of politics."

And he left his position on the hearth-rug to give her stronger testimony of his approval.

"Oh, you know those genealogy chaps!" he exclaimed abruptly. "They fear they can do nothing for me. They can't find just how I fit into the Gore family, even if I'm really entitled to membership in that illustrious clan. Now, my attorneys are offering a thousand dollars reward for information as to my parentage. They're going to publish notices here, and in Europe."

"What rubbish!" cried the girl, mild-

ly indignant. "For so great a man, Douglas, I think you're shockingly silly in some ways. You're quite certain enough that your name is Gore; and, really, you might have been satisfied with General Crewe's name alone; the dear old man was a perfect father to you; and he was always rather hurt, I think, because you were such a reluctant son."

"I never can get the matter straight, Douglas!" exclaimed Mrs. Gainsford testily. "There seems to be a deal of needless bother. General Crewe, who was in the American consular service in India, found you, a wailing infant, the only living thing in the streets of Bhamo

after the massacre, didn't he? He was satisfied, I believe, that you were the child of Captain Gore, an American soldier of fortune serving with the British engineers. And, although he knew nothing of Captain Gore's family here in Boston, he thought well enough of that officer to adopt you and treat you as a son of his own. I'm sure I should be abundantly satisfied with that. The fact that you can't trace that unfortunate Captain Gore's origin beyond the fact that he was a Bostonian is hardly worth stewing about, really!"

Douglas Gore laughed patiently.

"But a fellow likes to know just who he is, you know," he said. "Now, suppose I should find that dear, old General Crewe's idea of Captain Gore was all wrong? Suppose it turned out that I was nothing but the brat of a British artillery man or a field musician? What would Mary's father say? A Massachusetts statesman of flawless colonial stock doesn't marry his daughter to an army foundling, you know."

"Foundling fiddlesticks!" retorted the old lady peevishly. "I say, let my brother do the worrying. I fancy he's chiefly anxious about getting you into the family, young man, before you have a chance to upset his whole political constituency."

"Oh, Douglas, if you love me, get that tea poured and give me a muffin!" wailed Miss Mary Eldon disconsolately. "What are all the family trees and constituencies compared to my present hunger?"

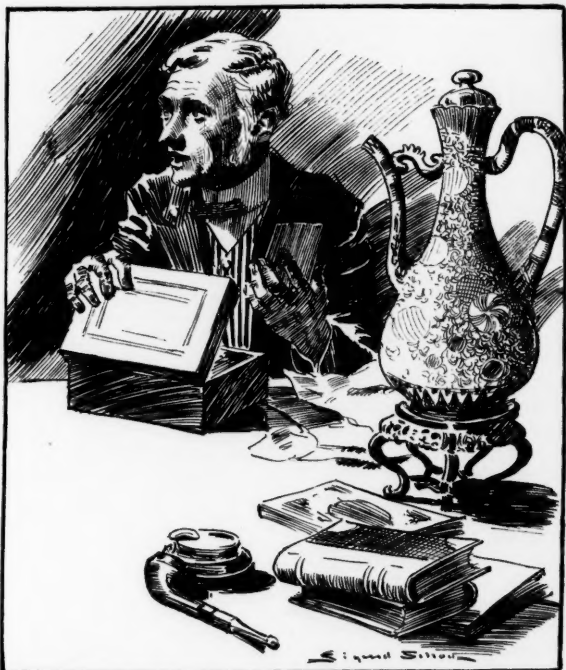
The matter of the squalling infant of the Bhamo massacre was

dropped abruptly in favor of three cups of Russian Caravan; and the admirable Gosset moved among the tea things and furniture without so much as clinking a spoon or saucer.

Presently the two women discovered with horror that dinner time was impending, and they made a hurried departure, commanding the host to follow them to Miss Mary's house as soon as he could get into evening togs.

When Douglas Gore returned from the Eldon's Commonwealth Avenue home at eleven o'clock, Gosset had his dressing robe and slippers ready for him, and his pipe and tobacco jar on a taboret by the fire.

"Two letters, sir," said the servant, holding out a tray as the master filled and lighted his pipe.



*The valet started nervously, and scrambled his treasures together as might a thief or miser.*

Gore opened the letters and glanced at them casually. From one he drew a typed slip, and read it over with a smile of whimsical amusement.

"That, Gosset," he remarked, with a friendly laugh, "is an offer of a thousand dollars for information as to how and why I came into the world. I dare say you know my origin is a bit obscure? My attorneys are sending this notice broadcast in the hope of clearing up my pedigree."

Gosset appeared a trifle pained by the confidence, but he glanced at the notice with respectful interest.

"I suppose you're quite right in doing all that, sir," he said constrainedly, "but, if you'll allow me, sir, it does seem to me a bit superfluous. I've seen a great deal of gentlemen since I've been in service, and I find it's not hard to tell a real gentleman without asking for his official pedigree, sir. It's the same with everything, sir. I don't have to see a bulldog's registry number to know if he's a good show dog."

"Gosset, you're prejudiced up to the ears," laughed the master. "If I were to leave it to you, you'd prove me nothing less than a direct descendant of George Washington. And now I'm going to bed. I'm the slave of the people now, and I must learn to keep regular hours and conserve my energy. Good night, Gosset."

"Good night, sir," answered the valet simply, but with a suspicion of huskiness in his tone.

Half an hour later, the servant tiptoed to the bedroom door and peered furtively at the still form lying on the bed by the light of a guttering candle. Then he slipped hurriedly, but silently, away to his own room, and returned presently with an old tin box under his arm.

Once more he peered into the chamber, and listened to the deep breathing of the sleeper. Stealthily he carried the tin box to the reading table, opened it, and emptied some letters and a few odd trinkets upon the leather table cover.

His immobile face lost its masklike hardness as he coned the things under the dim light of the lamp; and after a

while a tear made a spot upon the table cover. That was when he held two faded photographs to the light. One of them showed a comely young woman of five-and-twenty holding a chubby baby in her arms; the other was a spirited portrait of a dashing young drum major in the uniform of the field music of the Lancashire Fusiliers. On the lower margin of the latter picture was written in ink, faded almost to obliteration: "Charles James Gosset, Lancashire Fusiliers, Bhamo, Burma, June, 1881."

A sigh of fatigue came suddenly from the bedroom, and the bed creaked as the sleeper turned over.

The valet started nervously, and scrambled his treasures together as might a thief or miser. He gathered them all carefully in his hands, crept to the still-glowing fire in the grate, and dropped them upon the embers, one by one.

The last things to go were the picture of the young mother and a small, braided lock of flaxen, baby hair; and he kissed them both tenderly before he let them fall. Tears fell upon the hot andirons and hissed, and the old servant's habitually rigid, military shoulders drooped and shook convulsively.

A little later he rose from the hearth-rug and crept cringing to the chamber door. The tears, choked back so many years, were not easily checked; and he committed unconsciously the sacrilege of smothering them for an instant in the damask of the door hangings.

The man on the bed stirred suddenly, and spoke sleepily.

"Why, Gosset, why aren't you in bed?" he inquired.

The old figure stiffened and pulled itself erect. Gosset had never been so long in answering his master before. He coughed harshly and cleared his throat; and it seemed that the broken words that followed came from a sudden hoarseness.

"I beg pardon, sir," he almost sobbed. "I'm sorry if I wakened you, sir. I'm just putting out the lights." Then, after a pause, in a broken, stifled whisper: "God bless you, sir!"



# Trevathen Returns

By Virginia Middleton.

Author of "Lansing's Daughter," "Carlton Reforms," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY E. A. FURMAN

IT was unthinkable! It was indecent! It was—Mrs. Lorimer paused in her self-accusations to find a word black enough to paint her opinion of her own state of mind. Her limited vocabulary did not supply one; language failed miserably, she felt, in providing adjectives to characterize fitly mothers who were actually jealous of their own daughters. Disgusting! Inhuman! Oh, for the tongues of men and of angels, that she might scourge herself so that her hardened, shameless heart would feel the scourge!

She gained her room, and shut the door softly behind her. Usually it stood welcomingly open to the wide stair landing, though Vivian seldom enough availed herself of its mute invitation. A pleasant room, with its muslins and its old-fashioned chintzes, with the sunlight and the sweet-scented June air flowing in through the four generous windows, with the workbasket domestically full, with the walnut bedstead falling between the two periods of mahogany correctness and white-iron hygiene, yet somehow having a character and charm of its own.

Mrs. Lorimer dropped into her rush-bottomed rocker beside the sewing stand, and looked at the picture over the mantelshelf. Her mother, benign and spectacled, her mother, sedately capped, her own dear, old-fashioned mother! *There* was a woman who would never have been jealous of her

daughter. *There* was a mother of the sort that mothers should be; that all mothers were, except the very outcasts of motherhood. Imagine that dear, gray-haired, old lady's being jealous of her, Helena Lorimer! She turned away from the accusing portrait. But over the bed hung another, more accusing still, the eternal type, Mary, with her Divine Baby at her breast.

"Oh!" groaned Helena, and went to the window.

Out beyond the garden the mowers were busy in the big field; there, among the hayricks, she might escape the contrast between her own suddenly, surprisingly unregenerate heart and the world-old tradition. Out there the cricketlike hum of the mowing machine, the laughter and shouts of the men, might drown the reproachful lullabies that tried to sound in her guilty ears. Out there the big, strong horses would suggest no human accusations.

But the village street, as well as the lawn, with its flowering border and the fields beyond, was visible from the window. And from the village street sounded a clear young laugh—Vivian's. It had always been a gentle music in her mother's ears until now. To-day, however, Helena impatiently lowered the window against its melody, and walked back into her room to escape the sight that accompanied it—Vivian, tall, strong, supple, keeping pace with Trevathen.

Mrs. Lorimer stepped softly to her door, and locked it. She would not be interrupted, she would not be made, in spite of herself, a witness of that gay, inappropriate companionship—her daughter Vivian's with Ralph Trevathen.

And in ten minutes she grew a little bitter because no effort had been made to interrupt her. They hadn't even come into the house. They had gone on toward the clubhouse at the end of the long, village street—Vivian, as usual, quite indifferent to the fact that she had a mother; Ralph more profoundly indifferent still to the fact that Roseport held for him an old sweet-heart.

Helena sternly took up her darning. She was a fool—let her work her folly out, smother it in piles of stockings, strangle it with tapes, work it to death!

It was more easily resolved than done, however. The sweet June afternoon called her, the newly aroused youth in her veins protested against the drudgery. She wanted to be out among the soft breezes and the soft scents, she wanted to be a part of the pulsing, young life of the world. She wanted to be having her tea, to an accompaniment of compliment and laughter, up there on the club piazza, where at this very moment Vivian and her comrades were making Ralph Trevathen feel like one of their own contemporaries.

Why, he was older than she—Helena—a good five years older than she! It was absurd for him to be masquerading as a boy athlete to please the young Dianas of the town, the half-fledged girls. The man was forty-five! What an imbecile thing for him to be playing with girls of eighteen and nineteen! Why, he was more vigorously and ostentatiously youthful now than he had been twenty years before! In their young days—his and hers—he had been rather a grave person, scorning the sports of his fellows.

Twenty years before! Helena's darning needle fell from her fingers on top of the pile of mending in her lap. Twenty years before, when they had had their bitter quarrel, he and she! It

had been that very gravity of his which had precipitated it; he had held dancing to be a pursuit beneath the recognition of a man of intellect, and he had held that the betrothed of a man of intellect should share his tastes exactly.

How he had always loathed it when she went to dances! How he had sulked, and lowered, and gloomed, and violently declared that he was not jealous, but that he distinctly considered capering upon the toes as an occupation fit only for goats, and ill becoming the possessors of immortal minds! And how she had loved to dance in those old, sunny, radiant days, when she was able to make him sulk, and lower, and gloom! How she had loved the music and the lights, the rhythm, and the flowers, and the floating! How wonderfully John Lorimer had danced!

She was back again in the scented, moonlit evening when she had first floated off to fairyland with his arms around her. He was a stranger in Roseport, but the kind of man who does not remain a stranger long anywhere where there is youth and high-hearted gaiety. He had danced, and guitar-strummed, and sung his way into all their favor within a fortnight after his arrival at the village hotel.

She had loved to dance with him, and Ralph had forbidden it. He used harsh words in his prohibition. To this day Helena's blood leaped defiantly at their memory. He had accused her not alone of lightness, of coquetry, but of wantonness as well.

All the independent ire of her forbears had answered him. Was she, sprung of a stock that had fought in two lands for personal freedom, to bend a suppliant head before the brutal, outrageous command, the impertinent insinuations of any man? Not she!

And one morning, soon after she had flung his ring at his feet, according to the most approved manner of her favorite angry heroines, and also according to the dictates of her uncontrolled young temper, Roseport had awakened to the information that Ralph Trevathen had gone to Colorado to work upon his uncle's ranch.

And John Lorimer had smiled, half quizzically, half inquiringly, upon her. Was she going to wear the willow for a boor who flouted her before the whole town? his smile had seemed to ask. And her flashing eyes had answered a defiant "No!" and she and John had danced themselves into matrimony before three months had passed.

What an aching, sore, hurt little heart she had carried with her to the altar—foolish, impulsive child that she had been! How she had told herself bitterly that if Ralph had given a sign at any moment, up to the very church door, she would have obeyed it!

But he did not. He never gave a sign until he had alighted from the train at the new Roseport Station three weeks ago—a youngish man, with keen, amused eyes, a swinging, springing tread, brown skin, square shoulders; "a perfect Remington type in English clothes," as Vivian had enthusiastically declared of him on first sight.

And even then he had given no sign; only had looked rather long into her eyes, and pressed her hand with a firm grip, and said: "How things have turned out for us! To think of that pretty, big girl out in the garden being your daughter!" She had felt the jealous stab then.

She went back in her thoughts to the day when she had dragged her foolish little feet up the church aisle, wondering hotly in her heart if Ralph would be sorry for all his hard conduct when he learned that she had really done it—had

really married another man. Oh, why had he cruelly forced her to do such a thing, when they had always been lovers from the time she could barely toddle after him across the daisied fields? Why had he driven her to this?

And then, while every one in the gray, village church whispered that she was like a lily, she had met John's radiant eyes fixed upon her as they stood hand in hand, repeating solemn words after the clergyman, and it had come over her with an awful rush of awe that she was being unfair to him, to him, the young, the easy-going, confident, light-hearted boy. She had suddenly pitied him with a sort of passion, such as his own mother might have felt had she been able to look into the bride's heart.

And from that instant she had striven to make up to him for all that she had not given him freely; to compensate him for all the love that she did not have to bestow upon him! No wonder, with such a task, such a charge, she had

swiftly lost her girlish ways! No wonder that all Roseport talked of the sobering effect of marriage upon her.

A little later, when the same gray month found her a mother and a widow, there had been small cause for marvel that Roseport's gayest maiden had become Roseport's soberest matron, but even before that tragedy had touched her to a swift maturity the knowledge of the wrong she had done her husband, the knowledge of the headstrong folly with which she had treated love as



*From the village street sounded a clear young laugh—Vivian's.*





"Come, daughter!" she cried. "It's time to go home to get ready for dinner."

though it were a page of a book, a scene on a stage, and not the living core of life, had transformed her from a laughing, dancing, imperious young girl into something quite different. Perhaps, if poor John had lived he, too, might have learned to be indifferent to the creature who, domesticated on his hearth, proved so unlike the butterfly he had pursued and caught.

Nineteen years had John, the light-and-laughter-loving, slept among the dark, silent cypresses on the hillside. Nineteen years had Vivian grown in loveliness, and grace, and vivacity. Nineteen years had Helena been the sober matron of Roseport, never feeling the faintest stirring of her fiery-sweet youth in her veins.

And now Ralph Trevathen, home on a visit, lightly wearing honors and rumors of dignities—how many acres did

he own, on how many hills were the cattle his, how often had he been returned to Congress, how many national conventions had he influenced?—Ralph Trevathen had aroused not only the old, tumultuous youth in her, but a feeling that her youth had never known—jealousy. And the jealousy was of her own daughter!

She should never have acceded to Vivian's desire to go to college, she told herself. That made girls mature and self-sufficient. Vivian at nineteen was more convinced that she was the center of the universe than she, Helena, had been on the day when Vivian was born! Vivian, who was like her father in her tall, supple, active, young figure, who had his grace and assurance of manner, who had Helena's youthful love of pleasure, and who added to the combination a calm self-scrutiny that was all her own, the offering of her own generation and education to her character.

Why, Helena had heard the girl telling Doctor Whiteley, the other evening, how to deal with the problem of poverty in the great centers! She felt perfectly competent to instruct any one in his own specialty, if it were a merely intellectual one; she might balk at telling Ralph how to market his Western cattle or how to manage Western politics—but even of that Helena was not sure.

And if, in her serene conviction of knowledge, she should tell Ralph naively knowing things about his business, doubtless he would find the telling rather an entertainment, and he would say that the girl had a mature head upon her lovely, slim, young shoulders. And then he would contrast Vivian, instructed, well-poised, intellectual forsooth, with what she, Helena, had been so many years ago.

Even for the girl that she had been in the past Helena began to feel a re-

sentful jealousy of her child. And then, with a sick rush of disgust, again came the realization of the feeling that she harbored—a mother, cultivating jealousy of her own daughter!

She covered her shamed face with her hands, and in her heart she prayed fiercely for cleansing, for purification.

Sometimes prayer is answered when it is for intangible good like that for which Helena prayed. When she looked again upon the world, there was a light of self-conquest, of regained peace, in her lovely eyes.

She put her mending aside, and brushed her brown hair before her mirror, scarcely noticing her reflection as she did so. She would walk up to the club after the comfortable village habit; she would have her tea with her daughter, and her neighbors, and her old lover. She would force herself to behave as became her years and her position in the little community.

And if anything did come of that evident attraction which Vivian and Ralph had for each other—Ugh! The idea was revolting! For all his springing step, for all the light in his eyes, the vigor in his movements, the time was not long before he would be an old man. And Vivian was a child.

On the club piazza she found them all, as she had expected—the girls all making much of Ralph Trevathen; the boys, home for their summer holidays, looking a little disgruntled at the popularity of this old codger. Some mothers sat in rockers, and exercised a mild chaperonage over the young people. Some others played bridge in a sheltered corner, and waved away the waiter with their tea until the final rubber should be lost and won.

Vivian was describing to Ralph the fine points of the latest army and navy game, which she had attended; and Rosamund Ellis, Vivian's boon companion, barefacedly asked him if he would dance three times with her at the club dance the next evening. Helena found herself listening for his answer with some interest. It was a gay affirmative.

"You dance now?"

She could not imprison the question

behind her lips, studiously as she had tried to keep reference to the past out of talk with him. He laughed and nodded.

"Yes, I'm a reformed character altogether. You should get your mother to tell you," he added, turning to Vivian, "just what a prig I was in my young days."

"I didn't realize that mother knew you," said Vivian indifferently. "Much, I mean. Of course"—she looked speculatively from one to the other of her elders—"I knew she must have known you somewhat, since you were Miss Sadie's cousin. But—that you belonged to the same—set!"

"Period of the world's history is what Vivian means," interrupted Helena, forcing a fairly creditable laugh. "One's children always regard one as coeval with the flood, and you obviously they place at a later point in time. Yes, Vivian, I did know Mr. Trevathen—or, if I didn't know him, it was not because we were not contemporaries and in the same set, as you put it. However, I dare say it takes more than that to enable one to know a person."

In spite of herself, there had crept into her soft voice the faintest hint of hardness, of acidity. How beautiful was the oval of Vivian's dark cheek, shot with rich color! How exquisitely young the curl of her dark lashes! There were bitterness and wistfulness in the glance she turned upon her daughter.

But Ralph Trevathen was looking at her, as she discovered with a blush when she turned her eyes from Vivian.

"One scarcely knows one's self, much less other people, at the age we were when I was a prig and you were a—butterfly," he said.

"She thinks mother was always a grub," retorted Helena, with a smile.

Then she moved toward the corner where the bridge players were casting up their scores. Ralph watched her curiously for a second. Then he turned again, with deepening pleasure in his glance, toward Vivian.

"Were you really a prig?" the girl asked, scanning him closely.



*He followed where Helena had led.*

"The worst in the world."

"Well, then, when did you first discover that you had a sense of humor? A capacity for fun? For I suppose you admit that you have those now, don't you?"

"I'm humbly grateful to you for reassuring me on that score." His dark eyes twinkled into hers. "I can't give you the date of my reformation—it was gradual. I suppose it began when I got away from Roseport, and learned that the rest of the world was not inclined to accept me either at my own or the Roseport valuation; that I had to begin at the beginning, and show them all what I was. Take away the effectiveness of a man's strut, of his private opinion of himself, and you begin on the good work

of reforming a prig. It may," he added, and the twinkle in his eyes deepened, "be so also with young ladies."

"Oh, I'm not a prig," replied Vivian promptly. "I dance, and everything."

"I've sometimes suspected," said Ralph, smiling very pleasantly upon her, "that the essence of priggishness isn't what one does or leaves undone, but the conviction that one does the proper things and leaves undone the improper things. That was my trouble."

Vivian yawned. She was not really interested in analysis.

"There's just time for a set before dinner," she announced, nodding toward the tennis courts, "and there are Wade Ellis and Lily. Want to try them?"

Helena, from her corner with the matrons whose active days were done, saw him, racket in hand, making a not inappropriate fourth in the young quartet. She had an unregenerate moment's wish that he might experience the twinges of rheumatism the next day. Then she sighed

impatiently. What difference did it make? If youth, lithe, supple figures, bounding motions, gayety, were what interested him now, what good would it do middle age, sober and staid of foot, that he should discover himself older in his muscles than his heart?

"I always discard from weakness," she told old Mrs. Hinkley, asking her advice on an important topic.

By and by the set was finished. She must do her duty as mother and chaperon. She went down to the court and called Vivian.

"Come, daughter!" she cried. "It's time to go home to get ready for dinner."

Vivian apparently asked Ralph Trevathen to walk along with them. Hel-

ena's cheek burned red with displeasure. But it was too late to interfere. Ralph had already looked toward her, and had said:

"May I? Your daughter has promised to show me the wonderful things the Village Improvement Society has done to the river bank since my day."

"There's scarcely time for a walk along the river bank," objected Helena.

"Oh, mother! When the sunset will be so lovely, and it's really not more than ten minutes longer!" protested Vivian.

"Well," Helena yielded.

"There's a swimming basin, and all that sort of thing, Miss Vivian tells me," said Ralph.

Helena nodded, and Vivian asked him what was his record swim. Hers had been three miles, she proudly informed him, with a boat in attendance, of course. His own was no such great matter, he said modestly; he doubted if he had ever made a mile.

"And what is yours?" he asked Helena.

"About forty strokes," she laughed. "I should never have learned at all but to keep an eye on Vivian when she was learning. I hate getting my hair wet."

Vivian laughed, superior to such weakness, but volunteered a small compliment.

"I don't see why you should hate it," she told her mother. "It dries in the darlindest little curls—like mine. That's one good inheritance I owe you, isn't it, mumsey?"

Helena colored slightly. Did Ralph remember, she wondered, what he used to say of her hair?

But an ancient citizen, unknown to Helena, stopped Ralph to give him greeting, and to ask long questions. Helena and Vivian walked slowly along the river bank, round a curve that hid them from Ralph's sight.

"He'll overtake us if we go slowly enough," said Vivian, sauntering. "Isn't he a dear? I wonder why he never married? Too busy to care about women, I suppose."

"I suppose so," said Helena woodenly.

They strolled silently on. Once or twice Vivian looked over her shoulder, and expressed an impatient opinion of ancient citizens. Helena seemed scarcely to hear her, as she went musingly on, her eyes fixed before her.

Suddenly she felt her arm seized in a tight grip. Vivian had caught her. Vivian was muttering something unintelligible in her throat. Vivian, with fixed, glazed, frightened eyes, was staring out at the river. Vivian was pointing.

Helena's eyes obeyed the direction given by her daughter's finger. There was a little yellow head bobbing on the water out beyond the sedges, there was a scrap of pink gingham disappearing, there was a pea-green boat bottom-side up.

"Two children, two babies!" gurgled Vivian, and screamed and covered her eyes with her arms.

Helena's eyes looked along the shore for a boat. A quarter of a mile ahead there was one, moored.

"Bring it around," she cried to Vivian. "I'll keep them up until you come."

She kicked off her pumps as she ran toward the sedges. Her heavy duck skirt fell from her as she reached the water's edge, and began wading out. Vivian, heedless of her mother's directions, cowered on the river bank, shuddering, crying, and covering her eyes against the sight in the water.

There Ralph found her. He shook her roughly to force an explanation from her. He got it—gaped, incoherent, witless. But he understood. He plunged into the water with a mighty shout, and followed where Helena had led. And from the other side of the curved inlet a man, marking the scene, pushed out with a boat.

"Your hair does dry in the darlindest little curls, Helena," said Ralph Trevathen, as he sat in Mrs. Lorimer's library that night, and watched her, limp and shaken, wrapped in a long peignoir, lying in a lounge chair before the fire that her wetting had decreed.

She smiled faintly.

"Does it?" she asked indifferently.

"And you always were the bravest woman in the world!" he added, leaning toward her, with a passion of admiration in his eyes. "You have not changed a particle. You are still all fire and dew. You are still— Ah, Helena!"

She was weak and unstrung from her fright and her danger. The tears welled from her eyes.

"She'll be as—impulsive—when she is as old as I am," she said.

It was strange, and infinitely comforting to her after those days of curious divorce from the sensations of motherhood to feel them surging through her again, to find herself again all yearning for her daughter's glory, her daughter's greatness.

"It wasn't that she was a coward, Ralph, only that she was young and untried. She never had met an emergency. She isn't a coward, truly. But she is heartbroken to think that she—that she—lost her head—went panicky.

She is ashamed to see you again. But truly she isn't a coward."

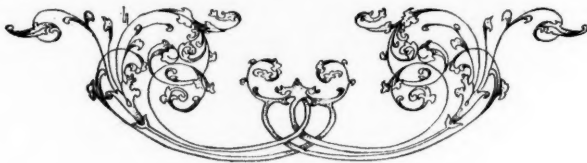
"Your daughter couldn't be a coward, not once she gets her growth," he answered her. "And as for not seeing me again—tell her that's all poppycock, Helena. Tell her that she will have to see me every day—because— Oh, Helena, to think that I had gone away and forgotten what you were! But I shall never forget again. You will never send me away without you again, will you?"

"You don't want an old thing like me," whispered Helena.

"Don't I?" answered Mr. Trevathen, kneeling beside her and including cushions, wraps, and all, in the embrace he gave her. "Don't I?"

Vivian, creeping shamefacedly to the door, retreated silently, with marvel in her eyes.

"Mother!" she murmured incredulously to herself. "And Mr. Trevathen! Mother! At their age! *Mother!*"



### The Thorn Garden

YOUTH and Love once chanced to part  
In the garden of my heart;  
"Later on we'll meet again  
'Neath the bramblehedge of Pain."  
Thus spoke Love. Then braggart Youth:  
"Rather 'neath the Rose of Truth!"

When the cycles' slow revolving,  
All our hopes and fears dissolving,  
Wheeled around the trysting hour,  
Where was Love? And where was Youth?  
Thorn of Pain or Rose of Truth?  
*Hark ye! Travel-stained and dour,  
Underneath the Rose of Pain  
Youth awaited Love again—  
While beneath the Thorn of Truth  
Jaded Love was seeking Youth!*

KENNETH RAND.



# Servants of the Public

BY RUTH  
KAUFFMAN



Author of "The Second Manner of Arthur John Kirke," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY LAURA E. FOSTER

**B**UT, darling," said his pretty, incapable young wife, "what are we to do? She's determined to get married!"

Richard Hatton looked at her in dismay. He was a young man—worse than that, a recently married young man—and so new to the mountain of domestic service that he had not yet dug through its strata of tragedy to the bed rock of comedy that is its base. He pushed long, boyish fingers through his curls.

"And she's the eighth," he moaned. "We can never go hunting them again!"

"We couldn't find her equal," murmured his plaintive companion. "She's worth double her wages, if it was only to retain the neighbors' envy."

"How long has she stayed so far?"

"Three—four—nearly five weeks. But then, none of the others stayed two."

Hatton, his hands behind him, took, from end to end of the still consciously new library, a helpless turn.

"Winifred," he said, as he at last paused before her with what he tried to make an air of hopeful firmness, "let's argue it into her head how silly it is to marry. We might, as you suggest, double her wages—"

"She doesn't care about the wages, I know; and as for argument, she's argued it all out for herself! It's because

of us. She thinks—Richard, she says she thinks our love so beautiful."

But Richard found no joy in this compliment to their marital perfection.

"Oh, indeed?" said he gloomily, though he dutifully kissed his wife. "I supposed that we'd pretty well deceived every one."

"We have, love, I'm sure—except *her*. She sees you kiss me—that way, you know—when you go in the morning, and when you come home, too—and she *knows*."

"I'll never kiss you again!" vowed Hatton.

"Dicky!"

"I mean when she's within earshot."

"Not at night, when you get back, and I'm waiting at the door? Not—"

"Not when she's about and can have ideas put into her head. And, Winnie, you'll have to look more unhappy."

"She's such a good cook."

"Can't you look unhappy?"

"And she's so willing. All day long she's telephoning to the grocer for one thing or another, and she fastens me up the back wonderfully—the best next to you, dear."

"Well, I'm going to talk to her, Winifred. Don't try to dissuade me. I'm determined."

He had made up his mind to look strong, and, as he now felt tingling in his face the glow of that strength of



countenance which young manhood so demands of itself, his spirits rose accordingly. They did not fall even when she put her arms around his neck, and called him a hero. Autosuggestion will bear much.

"Shall we have her here?" he asked. "Or shall we go downstairs?"

Winifred debated it.

"Don't you think it's safer here?" she pondered.

"In that case," he declared, "we go to the kitchen. Will you come?"

The spirit of adventure, which comes with the wedding, had not yet left them, after six months of marriage, to tramp the commonplace turnpike that leads to middle age. His rainbow wings still fluttered before them, his hand still beckoned them forward as the husband protected the wife down the narrow stairs and through the hall to the holy of holies of Margaret Connor.

The ruddy goddess of that shrine, obedient to her evening custom, was still wearing her white apron and fluted cap; and she was crooning, over the splashing dinner dishes, a monotonous Irish folk song about a little boy drowned in a lake, and about his grandmother wailing because of it. As the dining-room door of the suburban house swung open, she did not cease the tune; she merely turned, for an instant, to her employers, a pair of gray eyes and a broad but dimpling smile.

"Maggie," began Mr. Hatton sternly.

"Maggie," sweetly echoed his wife.

The servant wheeled now from her dishes, and shook the soapy water from her fingers, wiping their red tips on the sacred tea towel. She stood with a slight stoop, her large, loose-shod feet almost as much in evidence as the arms that naturally fastened themselves akimbo at her ripe waist. Her dirge continued until it died in the last dismal lament of the sorrowing grandmother.

"Yes, ma'am," said Maggie, like an "Amen."

Mr. Hatton may have lost his courage in the trip to the kitchen. It was, at any rate, the youthful Mrs. Hatton that spoke:

"We want to talk to you seriously, Maggie. Are you very busy?"

"No'm," answered the proprietor of the room.

There was only one chair, and the wife took that; her husband pushed some freshly dried plates from a corner of the white wooden table, and sat at its edge. He started to open the necessary discussion, but his beginnings vocalized themselves in nothing better than a series of hesitant and unauthorized gutturals, and he turned, in something like panic, to Winifred. After all, it was a woman's task to deal with servants.

Winifred, too, hesitated. Was not this sortie entirely her husband's idea? The delay was ended only by the servant's intervention.

Margaret Connor masked a smile—they were such innocent folk!

"Would ye be after askin' me to make a new puddin' fer the morrow?" she suggested, recalling an occasion when the two of them had gone to much the same trouble to dare add to her repertoire of wholesome recipes.

They opened their mouths in attempted denial, looked into each other's eyes and, laughing, relieved their embarrassment.

"You tell her," the man pleaded to his wife.

"No—you," she coaxed.

"Was it," continued Miss Connor, "that the sheak was too deep roastit?"

"Maggie," bravely said Mrs. Hatton, "it's that we don't want you to marry."

For a moment, mistress and maid regarded each other in solemn silence, the former with awe, the latter with struggling comprehension. Then Maggie tilted back her capped head, slowly opened her capacious mouth, and exploded into a mirth so Olympian that it rattled the cups in the dresser.

"Arrah," she laughed, "is it *that* was confusin' of ye? Bless yer tender hearts, I wasn't wishin' to change me name this wake!"

"This week!" chorused man and wife. And the man added: "We don't want *ever* to lose you."



"Me name," said the woman decisively, "'tis not Katie, ner yet Maggie. 'Tis Miss Connor. Good mornin' to ye, sir."

Maggie, her apron raised, was dabbing the tears from her Irish eyes.

"Hear the sweet childer!" she gurgled.

But Richard Hatton, having caught the rope's end of a phrase, hung fast to the uncoiling hemp of speech. He spoke rapidly:

"We can't let you go, Maggie. What should we do? No one can cook like you—not even Win—not even Mrs. Hatton. Who ever made muffins like you—light, fluffy things that melt in your mouth? You just saved our lives when you and your queer box of a trunk appeared. It's not worth while living—or even housekeeping—without you! Who'd take care of the ashes? Me? Maggie, you ought to see me! I don't know how. I get the gray stuff all over my clothes, all in my hands, my skin. It's art to work with ashes; you're an artist, Maggie, an artist!"

He looked at her admiringly.

"And fastening dresses?" he continued, while both his wife and his maid-servant stared at him. "Mrs. Hatton was telling me again to-night how wonderful you are at it. And the telephone—oh, yes, the telephone! That's a hateful thing, and you're such a genius in managing central. That Thanksgiving turkey—an ex-president couldn't have killed it more gallantly! Sweeping? I've no doubt you sweep like an—a peach. Besides, aren't you happy and contented here? Why should you go away and get married? It's awfully tiresome.

"That's sound advice." Mr. Hatton clasped his hands over his knees, and leaned a little toward the amazed object of his harangue. He spoke now with tremendous confidence. "I've been married for—a long time, and I speak with authority. You've never been married, have you? Well, then, how do *you* know? There's a question. How do

you know that it's all it's cracked up to be?"

Maggie and Winifred still regarded him, fascinated, speechless.

"Poor Winifred here—*my* wife, too, and I'm not so bad as most husbands—why, she can't go to dances without me. I wouldn't let her. I'm never allowed to go to the club any more. I don't drink or smoke—or, rather, I don't chew. Mrs. Hatton can't stand such things, and she's quite right. Spittoons! Ugh! It wouldn't do. All your liberty's gone when you're married. It's beautiful to be single——"

"Yes, sir," said Maggie, "that's very fine, sir. But 'tis not fer me liberty I be after marryin'."

"Not for your liberty?" surprisedly repeated the man. "What else does any woman marry for?" But he awaited no reply. "Then it's comfort, it's ease. I assure you, there's no ease in married life. You can't wear the clothes you like. She never lets you have soft shirts; and collar buttons in stiff collars are unendurable. You'd wear negligee—I mean, to be sure, if you were *me*. And hats? Honest, now, you're not thinking you're going to be permitted to run up bills for millinery, and silk stockings, and lingerie."

"Mr. Hatton, sir, if ye'll be so good as to take breath fer a space, sir, I'm cravin' after none of them things ye make mention on. 'Tis after the love of a good, true man like yerself I be, an' me own bit spot fer livin' in. But I'll speak truth."

"Oh, Maggie," groaned the distressed Winifred. "You're really determined? When will you have to go?"

"I'll speak truth wanst," insisted Maggie. "*I've not picked me man yet.*"

For a moment they did not comprehend. Then Mr. Hatton jumped from his perch on the table, seized Maggie's right hand, and shook it in congratulation, while Mrs. Hatton grasped the left, telling her that she was an angel. It seemed to these young persons that Maggie's marriage must, by token of her unmade choice, be, somehow, postponed to a far future, and might even indefinitely remain unrealized.

As the weeks passed, however, and the master's and mistress' devotion to their servant strengthened, slow fear returned. No lover ever more jealously watched the men that went before his sweetheart than Winifred now stealthily viewed those members of her husband's sex who came, in the diurnal course of things domestic, to that suburban kitchen door, though of Maggie's actual courting she saw nothing. It was only Richard that dared touch, with occasional flippancy, upon the household czar's ultimate discovery of a suitable victim.

"Well," he would ask, "have you decided when you're to set up housekeeping for yourself?"

So far the answer had been invariable and smiling:

"Not yet, sir."

Nevertheless, the subject of matrimony did not for one moment desert the alert fancy of the maid. Belowstairs, in her absolute kingdom of the kitchen, she searched every invader with appraising eye.

The iceman was first. Winter had long since transferred the refrigerator from the cold outer kitchen to the snug, green-painted inner one, and the iceman had to carry his every-other-day burden past the sink and the table, where Maggie usually busied herself with dishes or pie crust. Maggie sharply counseled him against dragging muddy shoes over her clean linoleum or scattering drops from the ice. He learned to loiter.

"When's your night off, Kate?" he asked one day.

"What's that to you?" she laughed, and added: "Besides, St. Catherine's not me patron saint."

It was a week later, when he had cultivated the grain of her interest to what he believed the harvest time, that he dared definitely to continue his attentions. By then he had learned to address her correctly.

"Maggie, will you go to Coney with me next Thursday? I'll have you to dinner to a swell joint first."

She looked him up and down carefully, dressing him, in her mind, in his

best clothes, polished shoes, fresh, high-colored necktie, and derby hat. A healthy question rose in her mind.

"'Tis not me habit," she said serenely, "to accept of invites from married men."

She had spoken at a venture, but, from the gray corners of her watching eyes, she saw the man flushed.

"I'm not any married man," he protested weakly. "Who told you that lie? Come ahead."

"'Tis no matter." Maggie closed the discussion, tossing her head proudly, and turning to the potatoes she had been paring.

"Then, won't you come, Maggie?"

He was persistent!

"Me name," said the woman decisively, "'tis not Katie, ner yet Maggie. 'Tis Miss Connor. Good mornin' to ye, sir, an' take care to yer feet."

The ashman next drew her notice. His was rather a romantic figure, tall, broad-shouldered, slim, that appeared once a week to bear away the contents of the larger of the two tin cans standing by the back entrance in the miniature yard; and through the grime of his face she saw bright, blue eyes, good and twinkling. She flirted with him for weeks before he knew it. Then, when his interest began to awaken, hers became drowsy.

"'Twould never do," she thought, "havin' yer man come home the looks o' that. 'Twould be tirin', that's truth. I'll have none of him."

Margaret Connor had not been away from the old country long enough to make many friends. An ancient aunt, the solitary companion of a "widow woman," had, from her twenty-five years' earnings, sent to the little Irish parish in the County Sligo, a money order for an amount sufficient to buy her niece a new dress and to pay her way, in the steerage, to the United States; and when Maggie had arrived at Ellis Island, at about the time of her present employers' wedding, her aunt rescued her from the customs officials, and took her, for a fortnight, to her own unaired bedroom, by kindness of the widow woman. Then she had given

the greenhorn, who was far more experienced in the work of cuisine and laundry than Ellen O'Donnell dreamed, to a family of eight, with beginning wages of ten dollars a month.

Maggie knew nothing of wages; nothing of money more than the vague rumors of her own parish folk and the romances of emigrants from overseas. Had they not told her that the easy position of parlor maid was open in every household, and that greenbacks grew on trees? But she soon objected to "the huddle forever at yer heels," to the mistress that complained, to the "mister's growlin'," and, above all else, to the heavy, unthanked toil from five-thirty in the morning until late at night. She rushed to her aunt one afternoon, for advice; and her aunt gave orders to quit.

This cherished place that Maggie now held she had obtained through an advertisement, one of a large number that she had secured from the daily newspapers. She had casually engaged herself to appear, on the following Monday morning, at seven o'clock, ready for work, in the house of a slovenly, middle-aged boarding-house keeper, when she decided to answer an out-of-town request. With a few nickels for car fare and a return-trip ticket in her petticoat pocket, she had traveled to the little suburb where Mr. and Mrs. Hatton had begun to live only a few months before.

The moment Maggie had set eyes upon the slim, frail wife, with her mass of golden hair, she knew that she must live in that family. Mrs. Hatton, still enthusiastic over her tiny mansion, led the prospective maid, as she would have led her best friend, from room to room, explaining what the duties would be, and telling her with what care certain pieces of furniture and bric-a-brac must be dusted.

"This," laughed Mrs. Hatton at length, opening the door to the back room of the first story, "is where you're to live—the kitchen. How do you like it?"

"Arrah, the little darlin'!" Maggie had exclaimed.

The cook shop was very small, but there was beautiful pale-green paint on the walls and ceiling; the stove was new and black; the oilcloth matched the walls, save for its inlaid pattern; the windows—there were three of them—were big and sunshiny, making the room almost into a thing of glass. There were shelves, glassed-in, too, reaching from the ceiling three-fourths of the way to the floor, where they became a kind of long, open shelf with deep drawers. There were a brand-new table and a single new chair. Ruffled lawn curtains hung at the windows. Would Maggie come? *Would* she? She forgot the sordid boarding house, and promised to be with the Hattons that night, trunk and all. And she kept her word.

Maggie loved her new place and people quite as well as she had anticipated. To be sure, there were minor inconveniences. There was always danger, at night, if she went out alone, of the ever-threatening banshee. But, all in all, until she made up her mind to marry, the world in Clairmont went smoothly for her. Since her decision, she found truly that the course of love is rough, and, sometimes, it seemed to her, awaiting the suitable man, impassable. She had, however, no maiden's imitation reserve; if she set eyes on her husband, she would not be the last to invite him to be present at the ceremony.

Meanwhile, she lived her routine life of service. Up at six, in bed at ten, washing Mondays, ironing Tuesdays,

odds and ends Wednesdays, with more odds and ends for Thursday, sweeping Friday, baking Saturday, a big dinner Sunday; every Thursday afternoon and evening off, and every other Sunday. She cooked the meals, made the beds, dusted, and took absolute care of the kitchen range, not to mention an occasional peep at the cellar furnace; and she answered the doorbell, constantly ringing from postman, peddler, insurance man, book-seller, and callers.

She might receive, herself, any evening, quiet, well-behaved visitors, and the visitors might stay until the recognized ten o'clock; or she might go out with her few acquaintances if she were sure to return at that same hour. She possessed, of course, no latch-key. But, then, why should she ever have need of one?

Moreover, she was bored to girlish death by her calls on her aunt, grown crabbed with the years; and, though the young woman was duly grateful to the elderly Miss O'Donnell,

she found small relief in spending her precious afternoons off in that woman's dismal kitchen, or servant-smelling, third-floor sleeping room; and she resolved to go out nowhere, during the evenings, with a man not "picked" for the probable husband.

So, in spite of her duties—and they were duties gladly fulfilled—she lived a solitary life, to the end that even the confessional became something to be pleasurably anticipated, rather than a formal religious obligation.



"Good morning, Miss Maggie," he said, lifting his government cap.

Each day, however, was, at its beginning, "the top o' the mornin'," and each dawn brought young hopes. Maggie became strongly interested in the milkman.

He was not more than twenty-five, always cheerful, with a curious, crooked smile. He was not very tall, "nor," the maid commented, "very low, neither, an' sure he has a way with him." He "jollied" her and she "jollied" him. The early-morning hour of his daily clinking arrival became a flash of sunshine to them both.

Finally, the man grew confidential, leaning, in a hesitating manner, outside, against the back door. He spat a long, fine stream of tobacco juice through his teeth, his eyes, with the perfection of long habit, aiming it at a little white hump of snow.

"Say, Maggie," he said, "I'd like to have you come up to my place some time. Would you come?"

"Your place?" queried the rosy maid, her black, kinky hair about her face—she knotted it uncombed when she put on her woolen slippers on rising; just before she rang the breakfast summons, she climbed to her room to arrange it neatly for the day. "Are ye so rich as all that, me fine Mr. Willie-um?"

"Auh, you know I couldn't board the kiddie out! So's I have me mother an' married sister—her as is a widow—keepin' house fer me. That's why"—he looked contentedly the length of his coat—"that's why the buttons is alluz sewed."

"The kiddie? What's that, then?"

"That's me son an' heir," announced the proud parent. "Didn't I never tell you about Willie Joonior?"

Maggie gave a gay, open laugh.

"So 'tis married ye be, too, bad cess to ye? An' I intentionin' to be marryin' of ye meself!"

The milkman's face reddened, but he spoke quietly:

"Liz died when the kiddie come. Willie's goin' on five year'. An', Maggie, that's what I was sneakin' a hope you was up to. Willie needs a mother bad, an' I—I'm needin' a wife. Will you marry me?"

Maggie thought fast. But she could never be wife to a ready-made family—a widow man! No, no, she could never bring herself to that. Already the romance was gone. This man, who had, for a week, been trailing clouds of glory, shed their shimmer, and became again only what he had been—an "employed milkman," making his dutiful rounds.

"No," she said, but kindly, for she felt sorry for him, and her heart was swollen with pity toward the little one. "No, I've just been foolin' with ye. But I like ye fine—fer all yer sins. I—I better get breakfast startin'. Good-by."

He turned, disconsolate, and her conscience pinched her.

"An', Will," she called after him, with a moist smile, "good luck follow ye always. Remember, me boy, I like ye fine—but, but I couldn't never do it—never!"

She fastened the door softly as he latched the gate into the alley. She looked toward the kettle to see if it was simmering its way to boiling, and then sitting down in the wooden chair, dropped her head to the plump arms she had impulsively stretched upon the table. She laughed a little, then shook with a sob.

"Sure," she said aloud, with a collapsing sigh, "'tis a fine kind of fool I'm growin' with love. Love!" she laughed, while her face remained dark red at the high cheek bones. "I'd be better playing with the range fire. An', speakin' o' that, the master'll be after wantin' of his food before I can well look around me an' find poor Willie a rival."

Her voice broke into a lively sailor love song. That and her bustling tasks cheered her until the postman whistled and rang.

The postman! As she tied the strings of a white apron at her back, in order to conceal the blue-and-white checked gingham work apron, and as she made her bog-trot journey to the door, she pictured his unformed figure and his kindly, but unyielding, glance. She had thought of him before—indeed, at the very first—but he was too





*"Annyhow, I wasn't wishin' to break the news to ye too sudden."*

straight up an' down, an' too purse-mouthed fer the likes of her.

"Good morning, Miss Maggie," he said, lifting his government cap.

"Good mornin' to yerself, sir," she bobbed, a pretty young woman and prim.

She did not like always to feel that she must smile up at him rather than down upon him, but he apparently had no thought concerning such matters. He finished his salutation pleasantly, politely, slipped a leg over the railing, and, leaping to the next porch, whistled there quite as cheerfully and unconcernedly as he had whistled at the preceding address.

"I wonder now," thought Maggie, with nothing more interesting to think upon, "an' is this wan married, too?"

In the late morning the front door bell of the Hattons' house was rung by

another "possibility," a very nice-looking young man with firmly brushed oily black hair, the odor of the barber lingering about his cheeks. He came to install a telephone.

In her mistress' absence Maggie presided, indicating the exact location, and, in accordance with the rules of this household, never losing sight of the intruder lest he prove a sneak thief in disguise. She decided that she liked him, but she had, for some little time, her moments of suspicion; the boy looked above his announced station. It was only because the ambassadorial workman from the telephone company had such beautiful large, brown eyes that Maggie condemned her agnosticism. At length—for he seemed unnecessarily silent as he tinkered with wires and bored holes into the walls—Maggie could no longer withhold her curiosity.

"Are ye a married man, then?" she asked.

He glanced at her quickly, brightly.

"No, ma'am," he said. "I'm a single fellow."

"Thank ye kindly."

There was a pause. For her of embarrassment; for him of amusement, mingled with the adequate attention to his tools. Then he again lifted his gorgeous eyes.

"Why?"

"Fer why do you suppose?" she asked. "Because that I was wishin' to know."

"But why," inquired the man, "did you care to know?"

"Why," asked Maggie, "did I eat mutton chops fer me dinner last Wednesday night?"

He laughed.

"You're all right," he said.

There was reciprocal interest before the young man departed. She obtained, in the interim, his name, address, family history, amount of salary, and form of religion; he had her name, birthplace, and permission to call on the following Saturday evening.

Maggie was triumphant. This young man might do. But she would postpone settling her mind; she would, moreover, have another consultation with herself.

She had written on a slip of paper, in her large, foreign script, the names of the eligibles. Every night, before she fearfully turned off the gas that she dreaded, and opened the window to its crack of an inch and a half that she dreaded more, she took, from a corner of the top bureau drawer, from under its newspaper lining, this bit of ruled note paper, daily less fresh and daily less firm at the corners. Sitting on the edge of her narrow bed of cherry, murmuring a song local to the County Sligo, she examined this paper, stopping her tune to read slowly aloud. Originally it had contained the following:

|                |        |                 |
|----------------|--------|-----------------|
| Ashman         | friday | aleven o'clock  |
| Milkman, Will? |        | six sometimes 7 |
| Postman        |        | 8 and aleven    |
| Othter Postman |        | 2½ and 5½       |

|                |                    |     |
|----------------|--------------------|-----|
| gro.           | comes fer order at | ate |
| butcher        | a boy              |     |
| iceman, Johny? |                    | tin |
| garbage        | mon thur           | tin |

She had penciled a cross at the left side of the paper opposite to each proven unavailable, but she reconsidered all many times. She would deal justly.

To-night she again reviewed the list. The ashman was out. She dipped her blunt marker into her mouth, and went over the two lines of his dismissal cross. The milkman? Another time she passed through the events of that morning, and grudgingly made her first sign against his name. The postman? Never! No frigid manners the like of his! The other letter carrier? Long ago discarded, for he'd given her trouble over a registered letter from home; how was *she* to understand at once all the freakish policies of the postal system of a new country? The grocer, she now knew, had a wife and seven childer already.

"An' I'm not wan," she declared, "to affiliate a poor woman's affections, be-side, bein' contrary to divorcee."

She continued to soliloquize:

"Jimmy, that butcher lad, is a boy, an' a young wan at that. Sure, he's most accommodatin' like, but 'twould be pity to spoil me chances to matrimony a-waitin' fer him to reach the man's estate."

The iceman was, of course, black-listed as a liar. He had failed to confess to being a husband, though, she reminded herself, "there be black lies an' white wans."

"That drug-store man," she said, squinting an eye and slanting her head, "his looks is too well crossed. I've had fear before of the evil eye; 'twould never do in the man of wan's bosom. An' as fer the yea-yowing garbage slinger, he's beneath wan. 'Tis hard enough forever to be lookin' up, let alone downward on the scum of the earth itself."

There seemed none left but this pretty telephone youth.

He made his call on Saturday evening, and on several subsequent evenings. Maggie became so pleased with

him that she consented to accompany him to a dance in New York at the New Starlight Hall, and for this, as an especial favor, Mrs. Hatton granted the entrance key so that her cook might return when she willed.

But on the morning following the dance, when her mistress inquired of the sleepy Maggie whether she had enjoyed her holiday, the servant was uncertain.

"The front part of the dancin' was grand, ma'am; but it fell off like, near the end."

"Oh, I'm very sorry," sympathetically grieved Winifred.

"'Tis no matter," said the maid. "But I'll tell ye me mind, ma'am—I'm not marrying of anny flip, deceitful-eyed young dandy."

"He wasn't—he didn't annoy you?"

"Annoy me? *Me*, did ye say? Nary a bit of it. But no man intentionin' to marry me shall start by oglin' all the best-lookin' girls in the hall—savin' myself—an' then go thinkin' he'll have the chance to blow me a kiss good night before the door!"

For an entire day, following this incident, Maggie's singing voice was mute. Only gradually her happiness revived. But then, somehow, it did not seem to know how to stop reviving. Her sad folk songs burst into loud warblings; the house was turned to a joyous, if somewhat noisy, aviary. The weeks went, and there was no change. Maggie did her work well and cheerfully, but the master and mistress grew anxious.

"What's up with her now?" asked, one evening, the affectionate young husband.

"I'm sure I don't know. I'm afraid to ask," sighed Winifred.

"Well, *I'm* not. Let's sound her at dinner."

And, after the dessert had been placed upon the table, Maggie was captured before she might return to the kitchen for that interlude of rest between the cooking and serving and the eating of her own meal and clearing of the dining-room table.

"How're you getting along lately?" inquired Mr. Hatton.

Maggie was as anxious for the questioning as her employers were for information, but she busied her hands in the arrangement of glasses on the buffet.

"All right, sir." She blushed.

"You act pretty happy these days. I notice you're singing a lot."

"Yes, sir. I do, an' I am."

Mr. Hatton persisted. To gain courage, he winked at his golden-haired wife. He fumbled his own mass of light hair.

"You haven't"—he spoke tentatively—"decided yet when you're going to be married?"

"No-o, sir."

"Then, what the devil *have* you been doing to make you so—so birdlike?"

Maggie waited a moment, then blurted out:

"Annyhow, I've not done annythin' like Annie Shea there, up street."

Mr. and Mrs. Hatton surveyed her. "What's she doing?" one of them asked.

"Haven't ye heard tell on't? With all the neighbor gossip of it, too? Arrah, 'tis shamed I be to bear the tale! She's intentionin' to take to wife Charlie Ling, the yellow laundryman at her corner. Of coorse, the childer'll be nayger."

"But what is it that *you're* going to do?" demanded Richard. "You don't mean to say that you've actually picked your husband, after all, and are going to get married? I thought you denied—"

But Maggie showed guilt. The wife turned pale in foreseeing despair, as she supported a tablespoonful of her maid's latest dessert midway between the large glass bowl of service and its destination in a saucer.

"Which one is it?" breathed Winifred's girlish voice.

"'Tis the postman, ma'am, the mornin' wan," Maggie softly admitted.

"The postman!" echoed her mistress.

"But, Maggie, you told me, less than a month ago, that you wouldn't even consider him, that he was stuck up—"

"'Tis truth ye speak of me former

feelin's, ma'am, leastways of me former ways with him. But 'twas a manner o' speech with me. Sure, he's the wan man I ever thought on with eyes to matrimony! An' if he's stuck up, 'tis with pride at his fine position! He's in me own station o' life, too, bein', so he says, ma'am, some kind o' servant, 'civilized,' if I rightly remember; but he's in the government, an' strong fer the public, an' I doubt not the grateful nation'll care fer us both in our old age."

"When must you go?"

"Well, as I was tellin' ye, we've been in the married state two weeks——"

"Married?"

"Magistrate fer him, an' priest fer us both—but Thomas—I'm his wife now, an' don't shorten him—Thomas has the nature of a man angel. Annyhow, I wasn't wishin' to break the news to ye too sudden."

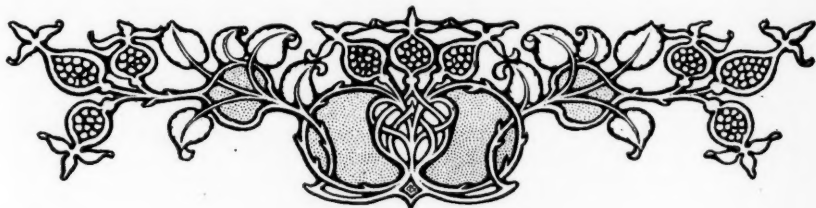
They gasped.

"But now——" began Mr. Hatton.

"Now," said Maggie, "he's growin' restless like. Besides, remindin' ye, he has the early-mornin' route, an' rises betimes; so 'twill all be right, savin' yer objections."

They waited.

"So," she flung, "since ye say the world's not worth a livin' without me housekeepin' here fer ye blessed two, I'm tellin' ye me mind. I'm givin' up me room with ye, but every day I give ye me word as a lady to be the mornin' bird, an' sure be here at the very dot o' six. Me husband, Thomas, 'll call fer me, after the dinner's cleared each day, fer to escort me to the bit spot we're after rentin', bidin' our time. 'Tis a very handsome apartment, ma'am an' mister, to which ye're always the welcome guests fer a sip of azzam, an' it stands on a wee street by the name o' Shelton, an'—an'," she ended, blushing, "'tis grateful I be fer yer kind example. Thomas is grand!"



### When the Angelus Rings

A CONVENT garden, like an isle of peace  
 Roared round by seas of traffic! Wealth of green  
 That blistered feet might yearn for—though unseen.  
 Their Eden, walled and guarded!—when its trees,  
 Leafed for the summer, answered soft a breeze  
 Found nowhere else. And then, the golden sheen  
 Of sunset on the old red pile, between  
 Thick ivy, shrill with twittering families!  
 Then, when bird voices hushed, a blander note  
 The evening prayer bell from its little tower  
 Spoke, sweet and wistful, to the afterglow;  
 And you, sweet wife to be, though still remote,  
 In school days, raised your reverent song this hour—  
*Was it, O dreamer, twenty years ago?*

JEANNIE PENDLETON EWING.

## TO HIM ABOUT TO MARRY

By Edwin L. Sabin

IN this, the portal of June, somebody—or two somebodies, even numbers being, for the occasion cited, the more popular—is about to be married. The assertion is perfectly safe, although I have not yet read the announcements in the morning paper. Forsooth, the assertion that a wedding is on tapis may always safely be made; and personally I don't believe that more persons are married in June than in March or in November. Bless our hearts, who would wait for June when they can as well be married in April, and who wait for April when they can as well be married in December?

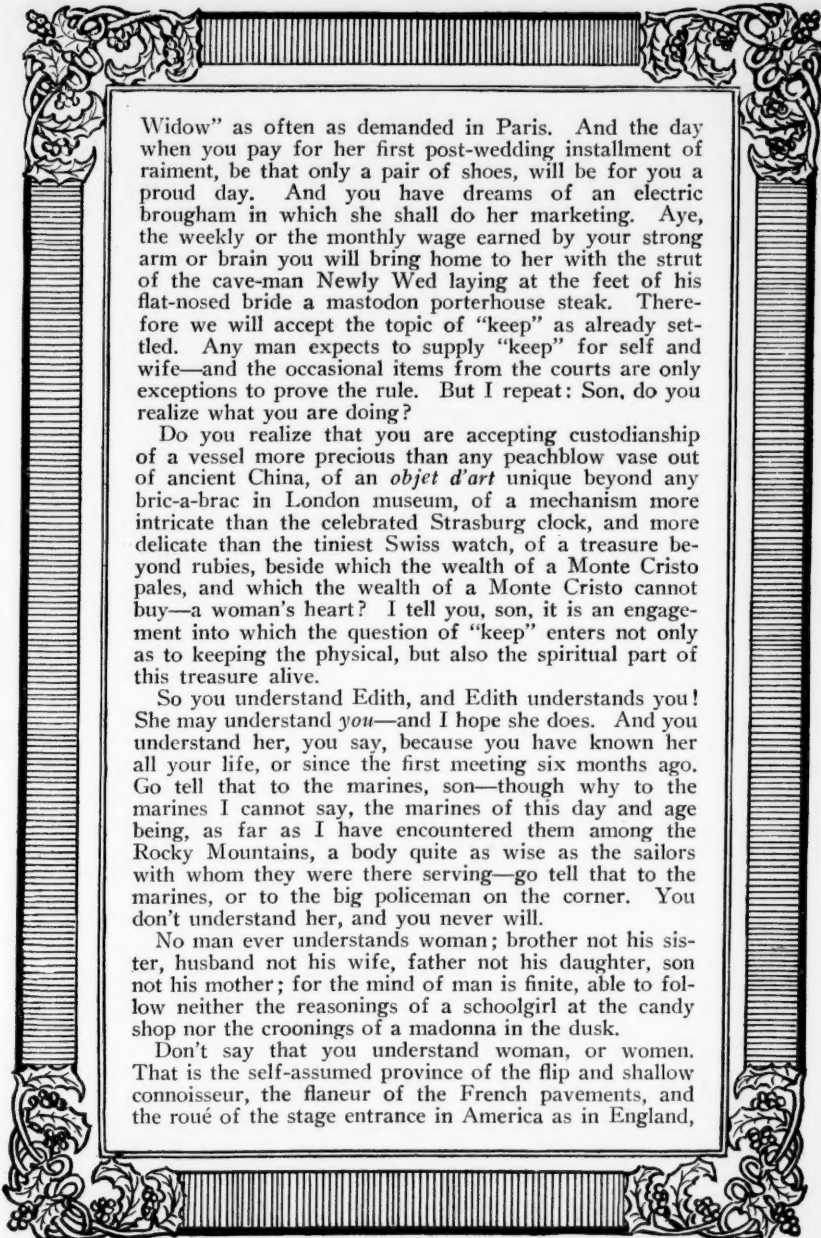
Consequently, this title applies, any month, any day, anywhere. Yes, and it applies to bachelors as pertinently as to near-benedicts; for never lived a bachelor who did not, in his inner of inners, maintain a little shrine, illuminated by the sweetly waiting image of Her—the Girl Who Was, or the Girl Who Might Be.

Now, son who art about to marry, do you realize what you are doing? Don't mistake me, if you please, and straighten up with dignity, to say: "Certainly! I am about to become the head of a family. Edith understands me, and I understand Edith; we love each other, and I have plenty for us to get along with, until I do better."

So-o-o? But do you realize, son, that you are assuming other responsibility than this of providing for an extra—assuming responsibility beside which the responsibility of a president of the United States is tissue fabric, and that of the directing engineer of a Panama Canal sinks to the level of a molehill?

"Yes, I comprehend," do you insist, using the phrase more direct. "Sure, old man. I'm on." What youth, what American youth, says: "I comprehend," except in Meistershaft! "We love each other, and we understand each other, my salary is so and so, I have so and so in the bank, and every man ought to get a wife and start in being independent."

Very well! But, son, drat the dollars and cents—necessary as they are. Of course, you expect to carry out that part of the bargain; when you engage a wife, you tacitly, if not openly, engage to "take care" of her, with a roof and a filled cupboard and a toque or "Merry



Widow" as often as demanded in Paris. And the day when you pay for her first post-wedding installment of raiment, be that only a pair of shoes, will be for you a proud day. And you have dreams of an electric brougham in which she shall do her marketing. Aye, the weekly or the monthly wage earned by your strong arm or brain you will bring home to her with the strut of the cave-man Newly Wed laying at the feet of his flat-nosed bride a mastodon porterhouse steak. Therefore we will accept the topic of "keep" as already settled. Any man expects to supply "keep" for self and wife—and the occasional items from the courts are only exceptions to prove the rule. But I repeat: Son, do you realize what you are doing?

Do you realize that you are accepting custodianship of a vessel more precious than any peachblow vase out of ancient China, of an *objet d'art* unique beyond any bric-a-brac in London museum, of a mechanism more intricate than the celebrated Strasburg clock, and more delicate than the tiniest Swiss watch, of a treasure beyond rubies, beside which the wealth of a Monte Cristo pales, and which the wealth of a Monte Cristo cannot buy—a woman's heart? I tell you, son, it is an engagement into which the question of "keep" enters not only as to keeping the physical, but also the spiritual part of this treasure alive.

So you understand Edith, and Edith understands you! She may understand *you*—and I hope she does. And you understand her, you say, because you have known her all your life, or since the first meeting six months ago. Go tell that to the marines, son—though why to the marines I cannot say, the marines of this day and age being, as far as I have encountered them among the Rocky Mountains, a body quite as wise as the sailors with whom they were there serving—go tell that to the marines, or to the big policeman on the corner. You don't understand her, and you never will.

No man ever understands woman; brother not his sister, husband not his wife, father not his daughter, son not his mother; for the mind of man is finite, able to follow neither the reasonings of a schoolgirl at the candy shop nor the croonings of a madonna in the dusk.

Don't say that you understand woman, or women. That is the self-assumed province of the flip and shallow connoisseur, the flaneur of the French pavements, and the roué of the stage entrance in America as in England,



who, blasted by their flames of false experiences, assert so broadly: "Women? Oh, we know women! They're all alike." As if this highest type of mortal being were a thing "pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw." When each woman is made, of divine purpose, the mold is shattered.

She who trustfully comes to your roof, son, be her name Mary or Mae, Jane or Jeannette, Sue, Sybylle or Samantha, comes "with joys unknown, and sorrows unconfessed," and thus will it ever be. She is beyond your comprehension; she will remain beyond your comprehension. There will be tears, for which, let us hope, you will not be answerable; there will be smiles, for which, at times, you were not looking. There will be the strangest mix-ups and minglings, before which you will stand aghast, but which you must accept, with faith in the one formula—the voluntary kiss and the simple words: "Dear, I love you."

This formula is the magic investiture by which you, gentle knight, may discomfit perils that wreck many a household and many a life. It is an antidote for the divorce court, and for that which is worse—the deadly divorce unspoken but acted. I don't understand woman, myself; but I think that with my one wife I understand as fully as did Solomon with his many. And my observation is, that incited by such formula, like a Joan of Arc by her vision voices, any woman will travel heat and cold, wet and dry, recking naught of thirst of tongue or starvation of body, so long as she has this upon which to comfort the heart.

But it is an antitoxin, my son. It is a preventative, rather than a cure, and should be used early.

She—this new, wonderful treasure which you are about to accept from an omnipotent Creator—is not to be regarded as something satisfied with a gown or an automobile; no, not if you are a true man. She is not something to be paraded outside, and adapted to your moods inside. Of course, there is much pleasure in hanging good gowns upon it, and of installing it in gloss upon pneumatic tires, and in having it right upon the threshold, or at the table every day. And your earnest intention is:

I'll make thee famous by my pen,

And glorious by my sword.

I'll serve thee in such noble ways

As ne'er was known before.

I'll deck and crown thy head with bays,

And love thee more and more.

But, my son, are you prepared to meet and treat a curious mixture of the human and the divine? You think her all the latter now; after the honeymoon you will proceed to restrict her all to the former. What will you do when she seems neither, and actually is both? Will you slam the door, son, and leave her, and wish you hadn't, and feel guilty, and from the office ring her up, and be alarmed when she does not reply?

A woman does not invariably reason along the lines of a practical business man, or of the financier which you, rising bank clerk, are presumed to be. When you think green, she may occasionally astound you by thinking cerise or mauve. Let her. That is no sign that she is "queer." She is no more queer than you. In fact, you will find that her instinctive judgment frequently is surer than your experienced one.

And do not be surprised if she also would pursue business. Probably it will not appeal to you as business—to you, the Great I Am of the new generation of bank clerks, grocers, contractors, attorneys, doctors, professors, writers, brakemen, motormen, salesmen, and all that strenuous company shouldering along the broad highway of fame and fortune. Business may be to her a bargain counter of Monday or the hang of a skirt, or a bit of lingerie, or the next lesson of the Shakespeare Club, or who won at bridge; and all these topics I mention with utmost respect, for they are her business, as important and vital to her of to-day as perhaps the polls will be to her of to-morrow; as important to her as are to you your financial strategies, the wholesale price of sugar, or complex cases of plastering or of clients.

My lord, don't leave her all the day to her own devices, and then sneer at them. Can't you accept them with all due gravity and seriousness? Prick her not with your lofty disregard, nor yet, what is worse, shame her with your contemptuous indulgence. When you two were made one, you were not the one. That she took your name is no sign. Rather, in the sonorous words of a poet whom nobody reads, the intention was:

To be like the majestic reach  
Of coupled suns, that from afar  
Mingle their mutual spheres, while each  
Circles the twin obsequious star.

So there still are two of you. Are you prepared to meet her halfway, and to refrain from any tug of war, in which you shall strain to drag her across the line and

entirely on *your* side? Is it at all probable that when you don't understand her you will confidently assume that there is nothing to understand? And which do you consider the more manly and husbandly—to prove that you are not wrong, or to confess that you are wrong?

Realizing what you are liable to get into, son, are you prepared to grapple with the exigencies of that new life? Are you prepared and reverently eager to take charge of a mystery, to take charge of a casket beneath whose lid you may never wholly ransack, but which is on that account not to be shattered in wrath nor cast aside in disdain?

Only last evening I was reading in the paper the words of a clerk at the local courthouse.

"Here comes a young chap for a marriage license," he announced. "How do I know? Look at his face, will you? His mouth turns up, he's all smiling, and he walks as if he could step over that six-story building. There's a great difference between those who come into this department, and those who go into that across the way," and he nodded at the district courtroom. "There their mouths turn down, and they don't smile. They're either mad or tired, and they walk as if they would kick a hole in the six-story building, or as if they couldn't step over a crack."

The young man passed in; he emerged behind a couple who were plainly—no, not plainly, but radiantly, bride and groom.

"Wonder what they'll look like in thirty years," remarked the clerk.

"So do I," murmured the young chap dreamily, gazing after them and clutching his marriage license.

He did; he wondered what *they* would look like, not what he and his would look like. That he knew; he and his would be forever young, forever beaming, their happy faces only softened by time. Yes, *he* knew; he was as cocksure as are you, son, at this moment. And that is why I am asking you, for instance, do you realize just what you are undertaking? A venture demanding all your charity, all your sense, all your honor, all your intuition, all your patience, all your sweetness, all the best that can be developed in you, throughout five, twenty, thirty, fifty, sixty years; so that when you shall be called upon to report for those ten talents with which you were intrusted, no deficit or mar shall be set down against your manhood.



# PLEDGE Of GOOD By FAITH PLANTER CHASE

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK J. MURCH

SHE stood under the dim light of the little station ticket office, and read the letter over once more before mailing it.

DEAR SIDNEY: If I had known what was in the box when you handed it to me this morning at the station I should not have taken it.

Don't think that cruel. It's only that I am not sure, boy; don't you understand? Does it mean that you love me very much that you should put such a lot of money into such a beautiful ring? I have looked at it a great deal to-day, and it is the loveliest thing I have ever seen. It is far costlier than you should afford, in any event, but does that mean an extravagance of affection, Sidney, as well as an extravagance with cash?

I promised you an answer when I come home. I'll give it. I'll keep the ring with me till I come; and then, if I wear it, you will know. But I don't promise, Sid—I can't. I don't know yet. Sincerely, BINNIE.

She slipped the folded sheet into its envelope, and read over the address again.

MR. SIDNEY PARLER,  
Care Morgan & Caile,  
Chicago, Illinois.

Then she sealed it slowly and dropped it into the post box under the lamp.

After that she went back to the baggage truck where she had been sitting before the spirit moved her to write. The train seemed hopelessly stalled. The busy engineer had stopped fussing about the steaming mass of steel, and

had consulted with the officious agent and the tired-looking conductor. Then there had been a telegram sent. It sounded as if there might be a long wait for a fresh engine from division's end.

Miss Binnie Wiler, being a philosophical young business woman, proposed to enjoy the soft air of a fine spring night while she could outside the stuffy cars.

There seemed to be no other good place to sit, away from the crowd, except on the baggage truck, standing beside the wall of the dark baggage room, and next to the huge pile of boxes and barrels on the freight platform. It was quiet, and dark, and peaceful here, and quiet, and dark, and peace tempted Miss Wiler. She was tired—tired as only a girl who earns her living by selling trimmings to the trade can get at the end of a long day's hard work.

Yes, she was a saleswoman—"just a drummer," she herself would have said. Nothing romantic about that. With a mother to support and an education which her State claimed was inadequate to teaching, she had to "drum," that was all there was of it. She was successful, however, and not unloved; at least, Sidney Parler, salesman for the same house, said he loved her. That sounds more like romance. Miss Wiler's main trouble was that she was not sure of its genuineness.

She gathered her skirts close about her and jumped up on the big truck. It was very quiet in this out-of-the-way corner. All the rest of the passengers were either lolling in the cars or gathered in the group about the waiting-room door. She felt free to stretch out her small, well-shod feet and hitch her way back until her head touched the wall. Then she took off her hat and held it on her lap, put back her head against the boards, and closed her eyes. She felt quite hidden from the world, even the little, rural world about her. The sweet air tempted to a nap. There was no danger of being left by this particular train, it appeared.

Yes, Sidney Parler said he loved her. She had known him only a year; but he had seemed to think there was no other girl in the world. He said he did. And it is rather nice for a girl who has to work to think that there is a man who holds such a conviction—and wants her to stop working.

The trouble, the only trouble, was

that Binnie wasn't sure she thought Sidney Parler the sole and solitary member of his sex on the planet, as it were. He was nice—it is a feminine adjective that means agreeable, and good-looking, and open-handed, and attentive. He was nice as a lover. Binnie had not yet quite visualized him as a husband. She found it difficult.

Meanwhile she was working and getting just as tired as usual, and just as lonely in the nights away from home. She was even sleepy to-night, for the stalled train was keeping her out of a reasonably comfortable hotel bed that she meant to take at the next stop—if they ever arrived at that stop. It was nine o'clock now, and all of an hour to wait before another engine could come. So she closed her eyes.

Whether she napped or not she never was sure. She opened her eyes to see two figures standing before her in the starlight; a man and a woman—no, a boy and a girl they were—standing there and talking in tones that they very

evidently did not intend for other ears than their very own. And Binnie Wiler listened. Brazenly she listened, for any reason you like.

"It is the most cruel thing I ever heard of!"

That was the first thing she heard. It was a girl voice, low, almost sobbing. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why Binnie listened.

"It is that—it's wicked, and a shame, and fairly maddening



*She read the letter over once more before mailing it.*



*It was trouble, deep, deep trouble, this, to these two.*

But I can't help it. It's done, and—I'm done, too, for the present."

The boy's voice was full of pain. It had bitterness in it, too; but it was mainly pain, like that from the very center of an aching young heart. Its tone, somehow, seemed to reach out through the interval of darkness and stir the fibers of little Miss Wiler's own.

"You never should have signed the note," said the girl, not in an accusing voice, but just in mourning.

"I know, Julie. But he was such a good friend, I thought. And he always seemed to have money, and the note was such a small matter to him."

"Not to you."

"No," groaned the boy. "No, it wasn't. Just think how it's cleaned out my savings for four years—six hundred dollars!"

"And all the pet, little hopes of ours," murmured the girl.

"Oh, he swore that I'd never have it to pay. He said he had a big check coming, and that he would take it up long before it was due—and all that. I thought I could hardly refuse to indorse for him. He seemed such a fine chap."

"Sam, isn't there any way to reach him now?"

The girl was standing very close to her lover. His hands were on her shoulders. Binnie Wiler was listening with eager ears now, and her eyes were wide.

"No way that I know of. I don't even know where he is. He was with a bond house in New York when he first came here. I supposed that he was in the same position when he came back. It seems he wasn't. He never told me that he had left. And then there is nothing to hold him on. I mean, I have no hold on him. I indorsed his note, and he—never came back."

"But the bank—won't they go after him?"

"Nix. The bank simply takes the money from the indorser. It's none of their business to bring the signer to a realization of his sins."

The girl sobbed outright.

"And he's wrecked our happiness!"

The boy was silent.

"If he had reached out a hand deliberately to spoil our lives, he couldn't have done it more effectually," moaned the girl.



The young lover turned toward the baggage truck. The small and inconspicuous feet of Miss Binnie Wiler were not visible from where he stood. He was much absorbed. He drew his sweetheart to the side of the truck, and they sat together upon it. Miss Wiler could have touched the girl's shoulder if she had leaned forward and reached a bit.

"I have never had anything that so took the heart out of me, Julie," said the boy.

It was like a groan. It touched Binnie's heart again. Poor boy! It was tragic. Four years' savings! And a wedding postponed—indefinitely. The pity of it!

"Oh, you must not let it do that," said Julie. "Sam, you must not let a matter of money break your heart. It—it's not so—bad as that."

She tried to say it bravely. She couldn't keep the hesitation, the breaking, out of her voice.

"I know what you are thinking, Julie," he told her. "You are thinking what your father will say when he hears what a fool I've been. Well, it's that that hurts me now."

The girl was silent a moment. Then she suddenly put her small head on her lover's shoulder.

"Oh, Sam," she cried, "just to think that, because you did what you thought was a friendly thing, you lose almost a year's salary! What kind of man can he be who would take such an advantage?"

What sort, indeed? thought little Miss Wiler. A slow rage was beginning to seethe up inside her. Strangers, these lovers were to her, but the appeal of their love was intimate. Her heart went out to them. Her anger went out against their treacherous friend.

"We can't have the little, Brown cottage, then, Sam?" said Julie.

"Maybe there will be others, Julie."

"No. None like that. It seemed just made for us. And the furniture we bought—we can't pay for it now, can we?"

The boy groaned.

"And the girls will have to stop giv-

ing their shower parties. Oh, think of the two that have already been given! Will I have to give back the things, now that—now that we aren't going to be married?"

Even Binnie Wiler winced. The boy lover used an expletive that was less than gentle. The girl did not seem to notice, however.

"And I'll have to go away and teach again, Sam, and we can't be together."

"Julie!" cried the boy. "Let's marry, anyway, and just defy all the bad luck. Let's take our fortunes in our own hands, savings or no savings. Let's tell people, and laugh at it, and begin as folks used to begin, without anything. Let's go and get—"

"Don't, Sam," sobbed Julie. "You know father would never hear of it."

Harsh father, was Binnie's conclusion. Still, it was like fathers—who had been through the experience themselves. Maybe it was highly sensible.

"And all the things I've made!" murmured the girl. "Oh, Sam, can you imagine how humiliating it is going to be to have people know? A girl disappointed of her wedding, right on the very eve of it! There is nothing at which people are so ready to grin."

"They won't grin at you," growled Sam. Then he bowed his head, and his hands came up to his face. "Oh, darling!" he moaned.

The girl's tears were flowing freely. It was trouble, deep, deep trouble, this, to these two. It would be trouble to anybody, Miss Wiler opined. She could feel herself in this gentle, little girl's place. Those things that had been made, those things that had been given, those wedding preparations, prewedding festivities! Dear, dear, it was hard! And it did look hopeless. There was nothing that could be done to the signer of a note who simply didn't pay, and who left his indorsers to pay. Poor Sam!

The boy suddenly stood up.

"If I had him here, I'd choke the life out of him, or my name isn't Sam Jessup!" he said in low, tense tones.

He meant it; and Binnie Wiler liked him for the flash of ferocity. It spoke

for his manhood. How she felt that she could applaud him! She thought of her own little savings in the bank at home. How terribly she would feel if they were swept away through the falsity of a trusted friend! And she had no such vital plan as these two had cherished. Six hundred dollars had cleaned out the little couple's all. It would not quite clean out Binnie Wiler's fortune, but it would come near to it. How had this thief—that was the name for him—managed to get this boy's indorsement?

As if to answer the question in her

month. And now it's three months, and the ninety-day note was due to-day. I have three days of grace—that's all. Then the six hundred is gone forever!"

His voice rose till it seemed possible some of the nearer people might hear him, but none of them turned. The girl stood up, and put her arms about his neck.

"Oh, Sam!" she said. "Please forgive me. You have been the one to work for and save and scrape the money. It's your loss. I've been thinking only of myself. Forgive me."



*"I could find it in my heart to kill Sidney Parler, if I could find him!"*

mind, Sam Jessup turned to his sweetheart and rehearsed the story.

"Only to think," he cried, "he seems to have cultivated my friendship from the very first. I remember how he used to advise me to invest my money—after he found out I was saving. How he advised me never to lend it. How he told me to keep out of speculation. How he approved my plans to marry and settle down here in this little place, and live and work till I could get an interest in the business. And then—how he came to me to indorse his note, 'because the bank knew me here,' and because he would only need the money he was borrowing till the end of the

Miss Binnie Wiler found herself swallowing hard. She even noticed that there was a slight halation about the station's dim lights as she looked at them. Could there be anything like tears in her eyes? Well, well! Poor children! It was tragedy to them. How she wished she could help them! But there was no way. If she were only rich, now—

"I could find it in my heart to kill Sidney Parler, if I could find him!"

The sentence was like a flame of boy wrath. Like a flame it seemed to come out into the darkness before Binnie Wiler's eyes. It seemed to burn the very face of her, to sear the very heart.

What? Was she hearing actual words, or had she slept and dreamed, indeed? Sidney Parler? What had that name to do with this?

It seemed incredible. She listened again with an unbelievable ear. She held her breath to listen now.

"Parler?" repeated the girl, Julie. "What a queer name! Was he the man who used to go up to the store with you and visit on Saturday evenings?"

"When he was here, yes. Sidney Parler. He is a thief and a scoundrel, a confidence man. And I—I am just a fool for loving him—for I did think I loved him. He was good to me, I thought. He gave me so many good pointers, and he said good things to Mr. Carson for me. He—oh, he ruined me—he's ruined our very lives for years to come!

Miss Binnie Wiler sat very still, indeed. The boy dropped down to his seat and put his arms around the girl. Their lips met in a long, tender kiss. She stroked his hair.

"Sam," she whispered, "if we've got it to face, let's face it. It will only be—be just a year or two—or three, maybe."

They sat for a few minutes longer, comforting each other. Then they got up and went away. The crowd around the station door swallowed them up. There was no sign that the train was ready to move. Little Miss Wiler sat and stared up at a dim Pullman window opposite her seat, and was utterly still.

A slow half hour dragged itself away. At last she, too, rose slowly and walked toward the waiting room. But she stopped at the steps of the coach in which she had ridden. She mounted to the platform, went inside, and to the seat she had occupied all the earlier evening. There she opened her bag and took out two or three articles. Sitting

down, she uncapped a fountain pen and began to write upon a long, blue slip of paper. It was a check. She filled it in slowly, and signed it. Then she took up two sheets of letter paper and wrote two slow notes.

The first was addressed to Mr. Sam Jessup, Clyde Junction; and this is how it read:

DEAR MR. JESSUP: Inclosed find check for six hundred dollars to take up Sidney Parler's note indorsed by you. He wishes me to express to you his appreciation of your courtesy in this matter.

Please send canceled note to me, care of Morgan & Caille, Chicago.

Yours very truly,

B. WILER.

The second note was longer.

DEAR SIDNEY: When I wrote my earlier letter this evening, I had forgotten that this is the country you stamped a while back, as bond salesman for that New York house. I've just been reminded of it.

Incidentally, I've paid the note to the Clyde bank that Sam Jessup indorsed for you. I suppose you have forgotten that it was due to-day, and of course you want it paid.

I've been thinking earnestly about the ring. No, Sid, I guess I shall never be able to wear it. I'll keep it, as I said, till I get home. Then I can give it to you when you come to get the canceled note. If you want the ring, of course you'll want the note, too. I'll give you them together—for six hundred. And I think you'll want them—if I'm any judge of diamonds. Sincerely, BINNIE WILER.

She looked once more at the first letter before she mailed the two. She wanted to add a "Bless you, my children," or something. But she couldn't. So she looked at the diamond circlet instead; and she smiled to herself in a whimsical, not at all heartbroken, way as she whispered to them instead.

"Bless you, my little sparklers!" she whispered. "You are closer to my heart to-night than you were this morning. Then you were only a glittering temptation. To-night you are a pledge of good faith."





Author of "The Tinsel Queen," "The Guerdon of the Christmas Baby," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY MAYO BUNKER

## CHAPTER I.

LA RIALTA THEATER,  
BARCELONA, SPAIN, March 21st.

DEAR MR. DANIEL ROYAL: A very unusual thing I am asking of you. Please do not think I am unladylike for so doing, and excuse the bad English which I am compelled to use, knowing no other. Mr. Royal, you are the great chum and friend, are you not, of Mr. Edward Franklin Stirling, also of New York City? I have heard of you so many, many times, and seen your picture, that I feel I know you. In one picture I have seen of you, you smile so friendly that I am sure you will smile at my letter and understand.

Mr. Royal, I am Rosie Kumpf, of the Krummacher Acrobatic Troupe, who have played in Spain all season. I am the girl your great friend, Mr. Stirling, said he wanted to engage with and marry. This fall, when he was traveling in Spain, I followed me from town to town saying he wanted to engage with me. And I loved him—very much. My troupe said I was foolish, that Americans only make fun of girls who are acrobats. But I felt he was different, and always I thought I would come to America some day to be his wife.

Then he went home, to business he said, and he wrote me a letter, but not filled with engaged thoughts. And when I begged him to answer, and wrote, and wrote, no word came. Mr. Royal, if you have ever been engaged with a person, you know how hard it would be not to hear from them, not to know if they are angry with one.

Even my work has suffered, and I cannot come out and smile before I mount the trapeze. Herr Krummacher, the head of the "family," tells me he will get another girl for my place if I am not more cheerful; all because I do not hear from your friend. So I have dared to write to you. Will you tell me if he has mentioned me to you? If he said he had engaged with me? If you know why he has not written me? To think he is ill makes me feel faint and cold, as if I had missed my jump through the air and were falling. Yet I did not like to write his parents, for fear he had not yet told them of me.

Mr. Royal, will you answer me soon? I am sending this to the business house in which Mr. Stirling said you were a partner. You see, he talked much about you. Please do not be cross for my interruption of your time, and please tell me if Mr. Stirling is angry with me.

Perhaps you do not know that acrobat girls can be as sad in their hearts as the aristocrats, even if their dressing room is their boudoir and their spangled costume their evening dress.

Sincerely,

ROSIE KUMPF.

P. S.—Pardon, but is there not a queer name you are used to being called by Mr. Stirling? A vegetable, I think it is. I have heard Americans use it in Berlin. If you would permit me to call you that, in case I write you again, it would make me feel much more at home. Mr. Stirling said it was a pet name.

R. K.

Mr. Daniel Royal, of New York, to Miss Rosie Kumpf, of Barcelona, Spain, via return foreign mail.

MY DEAR MISS KUMPF: Your letter came to-day, and I am sorry to find you took Mr. Stirling so seriously. Really, he is not worth it. He and I have been good friends for a long time, and know each other very well. I hope we shall remain friends; but, believe me, he is not perfect. As men go, he is a prince of a good fellow, but an attractive girl makes him say things he does not mean. Perhaps he believed all he said to you when he was romping through Spain; just out of the business routine and with altogether too much money in his pocket. But I am sure he had no idea that you were earnest about it. I think he took it as a little "make-believe," and trusted you would forget. You see, our friend is young, and does not understand women.

That you are an acrobatic artist does not detract from your womanhood a single jot, and I am glad you wrote as you did. When one has a trouble such as yours, it is good to talk or write it all out. Doing trapeze stunts does not tend to lessen the worry, and Barcelona must be beastly this time of year. It was as I remember it.

Personally, I might think you would make Mr. Stirling a splendid wife. Your one fault would be that you would love him too much. The woman who marries him must let him do most of the loving. But your environment has been

totally different from his; and that, too, is hard to bridge over without showing the mending seam.

There is nothing I can do except to tell you the truth. Mr. Stirling is in Boston for a week or so, and is in excellent health. It would do no good for me to write him and ask him to answer your letters. For you to keep on hoping that he may some time come back to you is only to make your life bitter. Why he does not love you, and chose to pretend that he did, I really do not know.

I wish I might see you and talk with you for a few moments. What I am saying is so brutal, and it is difficult to make it any less brutal in a letter. But do not let him break your heart. We see many beautiful sunsets, and hear much wonderful music, and then go away and hear no more. Sometimes we feel a sad, lingering regret, and wish we could look and listen again; but we do not break our hearts. So it is with him. Let him be as a song that is sung or a sunset that has thrilled for a moment and then faded. Make him nothing more than a sadly pleasant memory.

If you wish to write me again, I shall be glad to hear from you. As I said before, writing or talking freely about a trouble dulls the acute pain.

With all best wishes,

DANIEL V. ROYAL.

P. S.—My affectionate nickname which Mr. Stirling so kindly told you about is String Bean. Yes, it is a vegetable. I shan't mind at all if you call me by it.

D. R.

Mr. Daniel Royal, of New York, to Mr. Edward Stirling, in Boston, via same mail.

SLATS: You ought to be put in the stocks, and have a slow, brush fire tickle your aristocratic toes. Who in the name of Heaven is Rosie Kumpf, of the Barcelona music halls? Why haven't you written the young person in question, and told her your nuptials with Selina Fettes, of Painted Post, or some other Yankee damsel, were being arranged, and that you could not "engage with her" any longer?

Really, Slats, you ought to be square

enough to answer the little girl's funny-pathetic letters, instead of having her write to your browbeaten chum for advice. Imagine me on the matrimonial question. Isn't it good, Slats, that girls don't ever know men? There'd be awful few plain gold bands sold if they did.

Seriously, look me in the eye via a return letter, and tell me what wild romance you bumped into in Spain this year. This charmingly unconventional young lady writes me she is madly in love with you, and that you asked her to marry you. Also you have neglected to answer her letters, and that it is interfering with her work on the trapeze. Come, come, you mustn't do that, you know. I told her my honest opinion of you, seeing that you were afraid to do so. Also advised her to forget the bold American who followed her from town to town. And wrote home he was sketching a series of peasant types.

Never mind. I've got the drop on you with her letter, which would be a dead give-away fifty years hence. Evidently Rosie Kumpf knows no such term as blackmail. Anyway, her little note made me feel sober, and much ashamed for the type of American playman it depicted. You must settle down, Slats. It's getting to be too much of a drag on your friends. And write the child. Imagine such faithfulness.

By the way, have you heard from Edith Opdyke lately? I see by the morning scandal sheet that she is returning home shortly with prospects of a title following her. Do you think it is true? Good-by, reprobate.

DAN.

P. S.—The lady naïvely asked me what your nickname was for me. Said she believed it was some kind of a vegetable. Next letter I'm going to refer to you as Slats, and see if that has a tarnishing effect.

D.

Mr. Edward Stirling, of Boston, to Mr. Daniel Royal, of New York, via return mail.

DEAR STRING BEAN: You never could scold. When you tried it, it was the best lark ever. And you wouldn't

scold me if you had been in lazy, hazy, rural Spain, where one's sentiments run riot and your sober American common sense is left with the steamship company, along with your return ticket.

Rosie Kumpf is the prettiest bit of femininity that ever wore fluffy dresses and twirled around a trapeze on one leg, laughing all the time and showing bales of perfectly good Teutonic dimples. She neither drinks beer nor is fond of sausage; and her English, though broken, is curious because of the lack of accent. We met, quite by accident, in a little northern barrio, where mud, dirty children, and a forlorn music hall were the only attractions. I did make the show circuit; not altogether premeditated, either—sort of odd, spasmodic jumps. And I did babble of the unforbidden state of matrimony to Rosie. It was easy to start and hard to stop, and she took it so demurely. If you had ever been in northern Spain with a pretty girl whom you felt perfectly sure of never seeing after two months, you would say many such things yourself. You know you would.

Besides, she wouldn't let me send her flowers unless I would "engage with her"—and I hated to get out of the habit for the New York season; also to see dimpled smiles wasted on a measly handclap by a professional claque. So I said, "Let us be engaged," and began the far-famed flower route with notes in bad Spanish tucked inside the bow of ribbon. I tell you it was just a holiday lark; not a bit serious. And I did not think she took it that way, either.

She'll settle down and marry some cannon-ball tosser or sword swallower, and years hence we'll go to see her sons in their great "casting act, talent inherited from their mother, Frau Kumpf-Steingotter, late of the Barcelona Music Halls." You always were a sentimental old chap underneath that leathery exterior of yours. This was pie for you. I can see that by your letter. I'd give my clothes to see the paternal screed you send Rosie.

The rest of her troupe are wonderfully clever, and as wonderfully ugly.



Herr Krummacher is a great, bearlike personage, who wears skullcaps and eats endless crawfish cooked in sour wine. That was another reason Rosie took this as she did. I was the only man within miles who had pleated shirts and used a knife and fork.

String Bean, never, never take an out-of-the-way European trip, unless it is on the prescribed tourist route. You see what it leads to. Stick to your Cook, and you'll come home with a clear conscience and a pack of postal cards and fake antiques.

I heard from Edith's aunt, Mrs. Montague, yesterday. They sail next month. No, don't believe a word about the title thing. Wait till I close the deal for the firm here and come home. We'll corner Edith, and make her 'fess up. I bet she hasn't changed since the days of tag and post office.

A thousand pardons, old chap, for having you pestered with my reproachful loves. I'll write her this post, and tell her gently but firmly what the real state of affairs is. When I see you, we'll drink a toast to the memory of the little lady. Yours, EDWARD.

Miss Rosie Kumpf, of Barcelona; Spain, to Mr. Daniel Royal, of New York City.

#### LA RIALTA THEATER.

DEAR STRING BEAN: Somehow I have to laugh all the time I write that funny, vegetable name, and I wonder why Mr. Stirling ever called you that when you were children. Also, it sounds familiar, and as if we knew each other very well. Mr. Stirling would be more proper, would he not? But I told you before that your smile in the picture Mr. Stirling carries with him made me much at home with yourself, and I like to think you feel as if I were not a stranger.

Thank you many times for your letter. I have read it over carefully until I almost know it by heart, and I am trying hard to do what you say. After I posted the other letter to you, I wanted to get it back from the mail. I felt as confused as the first time Herr Krummacher led me on the stage in Berlin as a tiny child. But your answer showed

me you understood. And now I am glad. For I have found a friend. And I have never had a friend in all my life. That is rare, is it not? To know many people, to live with girls your own age, and yet to have no friends, much less family?

Perhaps this is why I took Mr. Stirling seriously, and made myself a faulty person in his eyes. Because all my life I wanted to know some one different from the Krummacher Troupe and the theater people; to have some one really care about me, to be patient if I was cross, to laugh when I was glad, to listen when things bothered me.

I have always longed to read many more books than I have been able, to listen to good music and see famous pictures. But, although I have traveled from Moscow to London and back again, I have done so in second-class carriages, with Herr Krummacher growling about lost time and threatening fines if we lost our train.

Would you like to know what I have read? I have the books, and carry them in my trunk. Herr Krummacher thinks they are extra dumb-bells to keep up muscle. He would not pay the baggage if he knew they were:

1. Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*.
2. Schumker's *Art of Logic*.
3. Shakespeare (all of him, but fine print that hurts my eyes).
4. Goethe's *Faust*.
5. Hans Andersen's *Fairy Tales*.

Would you mind telling me if these are good books? I have no one else to ask. The troupe only care for more money with less work, and the audience only care for harder tricks and seeing us risk our lives for their pleasure. Mr. Stirling never spoke of books. Even he was not the friend I had dreamed of.

Just because I make my living by acrobatic performances does not mean I have no soul, no brain. If some one had saved me from being apprenticed to Herr Krummacher when I was four years old, and taught me how to do better things, perhaps Mr. Stirling would not have laughed as he did—laughed when I did not see him.



*Mr. Daniel Royal, of New York, to Mr. Edward Stirling, in Boston.*

This is a very long letter. Please forgive me. Only you told me to write about the things that bother me inside. And I have. Will you tell me, if you have the time to answer, what you do all day? How you live? Sometimes I wonder what people do who are not on the road. It seems to me they must be very happy, placid folk, who have time enough to comfort every sad soul they meet in the day's journey.

Sincerely and thankfully,

ROSIE KUMPF.

P. S.—Mr. Stirling wrote me a note in which he said he was just "making believe," and I must forgive him. So it was only shadow love. And you did write him, after all!

R. K.

Mr. Daniel Royal, of New York, to Miss Rosie Kumpf, of Barcelona, Spain, via return mail.

DEAR MISS KUMPF: That you take me as a friend is very delightful. May I prove worthy of the title. I think most of us have a secret longing that often is never satisfied. We go along eating, sleeping, smiling, talking, shirking, and working with the set of people with which we are thrown—unconscious of the latent something which whispers that the person who might understand us has not yet touched our horizon, or, perhaps, has touched it and passed on, forbidding us to follow. Which last is the hardest of all. I don't mean my letters to be poor paraphrases of the old

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philosophers, neither are they platonic epistles to a young lady about to formulate her ideas of life. They are merely aimless thoughts by an aimless fellow who hasn't enough work to keep his mind from useless fancies, which are probably bad for him.

Perhaps our unconventional acquaintanceship, via pen and paper, causes us to say things we would not dream of saying should we meet with proper chaperonage, et cetera. I believe the murmured commonplaces of a drawing-room are worse agony than the periodic, fierce growls on the part of performing circus lions.

Anyway, Miss Rosie Kumpf, your little letter made me feel very sorry for you. Don't misunderstand. Just plain sorry. As one pal to another. Sorry you had mistaken Mr. Stirling's nonsensical flirtation; which, by the way, he really regrets. Sorry you have to be brave all alone in Barcelona, playing two shows a day and endless rehearsals. Sorry I cannot send you a whole library of books, and make Herr Krummacher pay the excess baggage, deducting it from his account of crawfish cooked in sour wine. I am, however, taking the liberty of sending you a small edition of Shakespeare. Is the print better?

Your list of books is excellent. How did you manage the ensemble?

You ask what I do all day. I get up at the hour of eight, eat altogether too much breakfast, and then pacify my

conscience by walking down Fifth Avenue to Twenty-third Street, and grabbing a car from there. Our firm is in the lower part of the city; a very dingy, reputable old building, where I am supposed to be half owner. But, in reality, I sit behind a roll-top desk looking wise, and saying very little, while Mr. Ticknor, the senior partner, manages things admirably.

At noon I bolt out again and eat more things. Bolt back and read the early-afternoon editions. Do a little, aimless figuring, and stroll through the place, just for appearances' sake. At five, I return to the upper world. Sometimes am dragged to tea fights or late calls, and usually drop in at the club to hear the last scandal. We New Yorkers eat horribly tardy dinners with very disagreeable formality, aping the English. There are the theater, the prize fight, the revival, the bridge party, the literary clinic, and a number of other sparkling recreations to choose from. We are taken here and there in bulky limousine cars, with plaid, striped effects and organ-horn attachments, and taken home again. We eat more unnecessary things, yawn, watch the weariness in the others' faces, and say good night with the firm conviction that all the world is a passing show. That, Miss Rosie Kumpf, is my life. Do you see why I can write such long letters?

How many are there in your "family"? Why did your parents apprentice you to one Herr Krummacher?

Sincerely,

STRING BEAN.

P. S.—They called me String Bean from a tendency of my salad days—namely, a straggly, persistent effort to send off new shoots in the way of inventing flying machines, mechanical cradles, self-operating shaving apparatus, and engines that scorned firing. That's why.

Miss Edith Opdyke, of London, England, to Mr. Daniel Royal, of New York.

TRAFALGAR HOTEL.

DEAR DAN: Your horrid letter came yesterday. For a minute and a half I

wanted to box your ears as I used to do. Then I made up my mind you were only Dan, after all, so I laughed. First place, you have no right to ask me about Baron Hermann Von Linderberg Grosskopf, of Grosskopfsecke. Absolutely none. And never will have. You and Edward Stirling always did assume more responsibility than was good for you.

Secondly, we are coming home in about a month. I am terribly fagged, and auntie longs for Melton Manor and New York atmosphere. By the way, we are going to have an awfully good time this year, so don't get so tangled up with work that you can't come out to the manor for a decent stay. I'm counting on you and Ed to help entertain the baron. We met him through Lady Annesley Meade-Chaffee. Don't laugh, Yankee. If you could see the simplicity of the nobility over here, you would lose your rank-and-file hatred of them. I'm afraid Danny, boy, that your ancestors were part of the howling mob in Revolution days.

The Baron Grosskopf is coming to America on the same steamer to visit friends. He is delightful; and I am sure you will break the rule and shake hands like a true thoroughbred. No more now. Auntie sends her love. Are they wearing hoop skirts yet? Paris is very funny.

I am writing Edward by the same post. Please, Danny, boy, *please* forget any foolishness on your part. Remember, we are just old friends.

EDITH.

Miss Rosie Kumpf, of Barcelona, Spain, to Mr. Daniel Royal, of New York City.

SISTERS OF MERCY HOSPITAL.

DEAR STRING BEAN: Your two letters and the note came, and I longed to answer before now. But several days ago I fell from the trapeze, and have been laying on a hospital cot strapped to a very stiff board; which makes one forget letter writing and only think of their discomfort. The fall was not bad, and entirely my own fault. I had been nervous and depressed. Everything

was drizzly, warm rain and mud. Barcelona mud is the muddiest of all muds, I believe. Herr Krummacher had us rehearsing every morning; and the pyramid trick, which is new, makes my head ache. Really, String Bean, I do not believe God gave me the sort of head that ought to be stood on. Whenever I do, it causes me to upset all my thoughts. I feel as if everything I had ever reasoned out was spilling all over my neck and shoulders.

When I fell, the audience was much amused, and Herr Krummacher came out to tell them it was only a faint. They brought me here to the Sisters of Mercy, and went ahead. To-morrow I must go after them.

If it had not been for the board and the hard straps, I would have liked the quiet rest. But one cannot be in this world without some boards and some hard straps. All this to tell you why I had not answered your letters.

I have read the Shakespeare, and love every line in it. You ask me how I got my library. My old Shakespeare I bought in London at a secondhand shop; my "Imitation of Christ" I found in a railway compartment in Austria; my "Art of Logic" was given me; the fairy stories came to me one Christmas time in a prize package Mimi drew, and Goethe's "Faust" I came across in the dressing room of a Berlin music hall. *Voilà!*

Mimi is the oldest of our "family"—her mother was a Cracow gypsy, and her father a Polish noble. Mimi has been with Herr Krummacher for over twenty years. You would like her if she would permit you to know her, for, although she cannot read, and sometimes uses strange words for a woman, she has a golden heart, and is loyal to those she cares for.

There are Olga and Wanda Reinsteins, two Russian Jewesses whom Herr Krummacher picked up in Moscow. Both clever performers; but there is no liking between us. And Oscar Frank and Pierre Leontine are the men. We always call an acrobatic troupe a family. The man who is the trainer and head is the "understander." Why I was ap-

prenticed I do not know. Just who I am has often puzzled me. But it is all so long past there is little use in wondering. And what does it matter?

You see, the effect of the board and straps makes one morbid. Sometimes I wonder which is the best way to think—cheerfully or otherwise.

How did you know Herr Krummacher ate crawfish cooked in sour wine? Mr. Stirling must have written you that. I did not.

My next address is El Dorado, care Plaza Theater.

Your life, the routine you described, does not read as it should. I do not think you did yourself credit. Your picture did not look like a man who would eat so very much and starve his brain.

It is time for vespers, and I must close. Good night.

ROSIE KUMPF.

P. S.—Neither do I believe your explanation of String Bean. I think it came from other incidents. Forgive me for my doubts. But friends, more than any other people in the world, must be honest if their relations shall remain unmarred. Husbands and wives cannot be strictly reliable and keep romance aflame; children and parents unconsciously shield the other with flattery and indulgence; brothers and sisters, through the blood tie, pass lightly over things which would be better explained; business partners always play equivocator at some stage of the fiscal year. But friends alone have the privilege of blunt, plain, outspoken thoughts. So, my friend, I doubt you twice. Forgive me. R. K.

Mr. Daniel Royal, of New York City, to Miss Rosie Kumpf, of El Dorado, Spain, via return mail.

DEAR DOUBTING THOMAS: I do forgive you for your doubts. And I thank you for the frank, little strain you showed me you possessed. Some day we'll take up the subject of the doubts, and see which one was right.

Just now I want to retaliate by saying, quite brutally, I do not believe you didn't mind being strapped on a board in a Sisters of Mercy Hospital in Barce-



*Mr. Edward Stirling, of Boston, to Mr. Daniel Royal, of New York.*

lona. That was one very beautiful, little bluff; but it does not get by me.

Won't you use the inclosed letter of introduction to Mrs. Charles Hastings, whose husband is traveling in Spain for our firm? At present she happens to be in the same town with you. I wish you would go to her and become friends. Perhaps she might give you some new ideas and a bit of insight into our American women. I will write her by the same mail.

Think as you feel, little Rosie Kumpf. That is the best way of all. You ought to resent the fall from the trapeze, the rough surroundings you are among. You are really obliged to have proper indignation at the board, and the straps, and the long, monotonous hours of pain, when only the groans of the very ill or the temperamental ones relieve the silence. Ever since your letter came I have thought of you, and wondered what I could do about it; but by this time you are in El Dorado, back in your fluffy costume, laughing and dancing about, while Herr Krummacher tests the ropes and puts the fear of the outcome into your audience's hearts. Please go to Mrs. Hastings. I am sure you will like each other.

To-day we are taking inventory at the shop, and I am a trifle busier than usual. So this letter is going to stop, even if I would like to scribble on and keep you from making your morning

rehearsal on time. Besides, I've heaps I want to write Mrs. Hastings.

Sincerely, and with all best wishes,  
Your friend,

STRING BEAN.

P. S.—Yes, Mr. Stirling wrote me about Herr Krummacher's cooked crawfish and wine. What did you mean by shadow love in that former letter?  
S. B.

Miss Rosie Kumpf, of El Dorado, Spain, to Mr. Daniel Royal, of New York City, via return post by one.

IN THE THEATER.

DEAR STRING BEAN: Your Mrs. Hastings was very lovely to me, and I thank you for sending me to her. We had tea in English fashion at five o'clock. I came from the theater with half my make-up on, and found I had come ever so early. But she would not let me feel that I had come ahead of time. She made me the loveliest cup of Orange Peekoe tea, with thin slices of hot, buttered toast. You don't know how good it tasted after the muddy chocolate they give us at the hotel. Then I sat beside her in a big, wicker chair, and told her all about our "family," and what we do and hope to do.

When she laughs, her eyes crinkle at the corners, as if there was not enough room for all the laugh to come out. If American women are like her, they must be the most wonderful women in the

whole world. Russian women are brilliant, and French girls are attractive, while our German maidens have a stupid, placid beauty all their own. Spanish señoras are affected and artificial; and the Italian women one cannot rely on. But your American Mrs. Hastings was so lovely. I do not see why noblemen should not try to marry your New York girls. They must be proud to have them as their wives, as well as to have their money.

Mrs. Hastings and her husband are coming to see us play to-morrow night, for which I am sorry. Somehow, when I sat in her little boudoir and talked to her all alone, I forgot the sixteen years of traveling with the "family." But when she sees me all painted and rouged, swinging in the air and dancing on a slack wire, shouting in Spanish when the crowd call out—I am afraid she will never ask me to tea again. And I would rather go there to hear her talk and watch her crinkly smile than to see any of the art galleries in Madrid. Oh, you must be very, very nice, String Bean, or else she would not like you as she told me she did.

Herr Krummacher is considering an offer from a New York manager. I would rather not go to the United States; but Mimi and Olga and Wanda are wild to go. If we do not go there, we shall go to India to play one-night stands with a small circus. That will be fearfully hard; but I am sure it will be better. Your friend,

ROSIE KUMPF.

P. S.—Shadow love? Just a foolish idea I have always had about a shadow world; a world for we people who are on the road and have no time for a real world with real people. Everything that is pleasant for me comes in my shadow world, inhabited with make-believe persons, furnished with imaginary scenery, charged with fanciful emotions and pleasures. Shadow love is one of them. You see, I have played this game by myself for so long that I forgot the shadow man never steps out of his frame to speak aloud—only in whispers. And when a real person did speak, although it was only a joke, I forgot my

fairy tale, and believed that the shadow man had come. Don't laugh at me. This is the first time I have ever told any one this. Herr Krummacher would tell me I was "loco in the cobaso."

R. K.

Mr. Daniel Royal, of New York City, to Miss Rosie Kumpf, of El Dorado, via return mail.

DEAR SHADOW GIRL: Mrs. Hastings writes me an equally gushing letter about you, in which she says you are, without doubt, the rarest treat she has had while abroad. Now, then, match that, can you? She tells me your acrobatic work is wonderfully dainty and artistic, and that you do all sorts of very dangerous, daring things without a quiver. Do you?

She wants to know you, and keep track of you; and you must believe that when she asks you to write her and make her your American woman friend, she will be disappointed if you do not.

Why do you not wish to come to America? I think it would be an excellent thing for you. You would find many things here to interest you. If you come, you surely will play New York, will you not? And I will have an opportunity to lead the applause. We are still taking inventory, and I am remarkably tangled up with work.

Please write me, and forgive the shortness of this letter.

Your sincere friend,

STRING BEAN.

P. S.—I understand the shadow world. Just what I hoped you meant. And true for many of us. S. B.

Miss Rosie Kumpf, of Salvadore, Spain, to Mr. Daniel Royal, of New York City. (A post later.)

DEAR STRING BEAN: Sorry you are so busy. Because I look forward to your nice, roomy letters. And glad Mrs. Hastings liked me. We are playing here this week, and she sent me the daintiest white coat and cap. She said it was from Paris. In El Dorado she gave me lovely ribbon for my hair, and two of Thackeray's books. Indeed, I shall write her, especially now that you



have reassured me of her caring whether I do or don't.

I am afraid we sail for New York inside of a month, and will be there a year and a half, playing from New York to Seattle, and down the Pacific coast. The reason I do not want to come is you. You, a shadow man, have grown very real to me—in a shadow sense. To meet you would spoil the shadow, the same as turning on bright lights blots out soft moonlight. And I cannot bear to lose you—do you understand?

Meeting me, you would murmur the commonplaces you spoke of once. You would admire my poor work in stilted phrases, and show me some small attention, even though the difference in your social position and mine made it difficult for you so to do. Of Mr. Stirling I am not thinking. It is quite enough to think of you and our shadow knowledge of each other.

I realize more clearly than you that there would be an inevitable disillusionment, and then our shadow letters would stop, and I would be lonesome again. Perhaps this is very selfish. I do not mean it in exactly that spirit; but I cannot see my shadow world wrecked. Sixteen years of music halls, and nothing but the people of the stage, cannot help but mar somewhat. And in our shadow letters—do the scars show badly?

So I think I'd better ask you not to try to see me. Will you promise? We will keep on writing letters just the same. Somehow I am sure you like to write them, because you can show a hidden side to yourself which your New York world never sees.

Will you answer this at Paris? 45 Rue Manon. We sail from Havre.

Your friend,

ROSIE KUMPF.

P. S.—Did you tell Mrs. Hastings to send me things? Is that the way American women treat five-o'clock tea guests? Somehow I had an idea it was the custom to give things to poor people—"bread lines" do you call them in New York?

R. K.

Mr. Daniel Royal, of New York City,

to Miss Rosie Kumpf, of Paris, France, via return mail.

DEAR SHADOW GIRL: Stop lurking in the dark, and come into the sunlight. Open your eyes, and look at New York, with all her bustle and progress, and—at me. You have heard of rural products following the show because of some siren, haven't you? Don't force me to abandon my business and pursue you until you surrender to a formal introduction. Illusion nothing. Shadow world—zero. Very cold atmosphere that last letter brought.

Seriously, why may I not see you, talk with you, just as I have talked to you in our shadow world? I promise to step back into the shadows whenever you say; and stay there, too, writing you shadow letters without end. But, being a curious sort of Yankee, I want to see the real Rosie Kumpf, whom Mrs. Hastings tells me should be playing *Marguerite* or *Juliet*, instead of with Herr Krummacher.

We know, you and I, that friendship is the most satisfactory state to be in. That love is a very uncomfortable boiling-point emotion, where everything sane and practical undulates like a volcanic eruption. And we know, you and I, that we are friends.

I know, because of your own confession, that you did step out of your shadow frame and learn of love. It brought you sane friendship after you had suffered a bit, didn't it? And you told me frankly how you felt about it all.

In return, I, too, will tell you I have stepped from shadow frame to learn of love. That I have suffered, and brooded, and saddened myself until I despaired of ever finding friendship. Now, when my love for her is as strong as before, I am glad we have found each other as friends, and that we both understand. I feel I owe the telling of this to you, who came to me so frankly, to prove to you the value of your friendship, the security of my confidence in you.

And to tell you that, in spite of her indifference, I still hope—a symptom belonging to all ardent lovers. Perhaps I told her I loved her too soon, although I waited as long as I could. But I

haven't quite given up yet. Now, Shadow Girl, will you still refuse to come into the sunlight, and let me tell you how much your friendship means?

Your friend,

STRING BEAN.

P. S.—I told Mrs. Hastings to "be nice to you." Please don't blame me for everything.

Miss Rosie Kumpf, of Paris, France, to Mr. Daniel Royal, of New York City, via return mail.

DEAR STRING BEAN: There is no use in being rude. That I have never approved of. So if you must see me and spoil our shadow world, you must. And I will try not to show my disappointment when I see it tumbling about me.

We have played here every day, and will until sailing time. Our American tour is different from the ordinary route. We will play many special engagements, Herr Krummacher says. I am anxious to see your skyscrapers and Yellowstone.

All my sympathy for you in your love affair, my friend, all my thought and comfort I can give—always. So little can be said; so much needed. Perhaps she will some day change and realize your worth.

Mrs. Hastings sent me more things to-day. I wish she might be in America when I am. Somehow I would not mind meeting you if she were with me.

Your sincere friend,

ROSIE KUMPF.

Miss Edith Opdyke, of Paris, France, to Mr. Daniel Royal, of New York City, via same mail.

DEAR DANNY: Please meet the ship, on the seventeenth, at four o'clock. I want to have a decent showing of Americans, so that Baron Grosskopf won't think us an utterly unloyal set. Is Edward back from Boston town?

Have loads to tell you; but you must promise not to be sentimental.

Yours,

EDITH.

Mr. Edward Stirling, of Boston, to

Mr. Daniel Royal, of New York City, also same mail.

DEAR STRING BEAN: Here's a pretty howdy-do. Edith and Rosie Kumpf sail on the same ship for New York. Edith wrote me they sailed on *La Reine*; and in this punk theater sheet it gives the item that the Krummacher acrobatic troupe leave Havre on *La Reine*. Wow!

I'm invited to meet the ship. Can't say no to Edith, or she'd cut me for a year. Hope the Krummacher bunch slide out the portholes and swim ashore. Oh, why did I ever lose my head in old Spain? And yet we all have to have periodic slips, don't we? I'll be home Thursday. Two days before the boat comes. Please think my case over, and give me the benefit of the doubt, while you plan some good get-away. Think I'll have awful headaches and things.

SLATS.

Mr. Daniel Royal, of New York City, to Mr. Edward Stirling, of Boston, via return mail.

SLATS: You pass up the pier date, and I'll show Edith a letter with a Spanish postmark. Not that you really care. You know it's pride, and because you hate being chaffed about things. But Edith would. Baron or no baron. And I wouldn't miss the sport for worlds.

DAN.

Mr. Daniel Royal, of New York City, to Miss Edith Opdyke, of Paris, France, via same mail.

DEAR EDITH: I promise to be good See you Saturday.

DANNY.

## CHAPTER II.

The group of odd-looking foreigners, clad in checked raincoats and flat, Spanish hats, ran swiftly up the gangway and into a rickety hotel bus. A tall, powerful-looking old man came behind, after the manner of the sheep dog rounding up his flock. Shabby valises and suit cases were hurled in the bus, and, amid rapid chattering in Russian, Spanish, French, and German, they drove off with a flourish, leaving a group of street newsies watching with admiring eyes.

"Show guys," was the verdict as the bus rounded the cobble-paved corner.

"Watch the swells," said another.

First came a portly, middle-aged woman dressed in an unmistakable imported costume of black, with a waving, willowy hat. Holding her arm deferentially was the Baron Herman Von Linderberg Grosskopf, of Grosskopf-secke, whose stiff, blond hair was plastered over his face like the doll wigs one finds on the European specimens. His fierce mustaches curled upward with a viking sweep, and two cold-looking but remarkably perfect blue eyes winked and blinked with disapproval at their first view of lower New York.

Some feet behind them was the merriest trio the pier had ever permitted on her confines. On one side was a well-built, dark-haired chap, with an irresistible smile and the suspicion of a dimple in the middle of his chin. He clung stubbornly to a battered, label-plastered portmanteau, which banged wildly from side to side, as he punctuated his speech with dramatic gestures. The other arm was holding a tall, slender girl, whose dark-blue costume showed off the crinkly gold hair and gray-blue eyes better than a dozen imported frocks. Her face was tanned from the sea trip, and there was a laughable, mannish, little stride as she stalked along trying to talk, laugh, scold, question, all in one breath; to learn the last scandal, the next possibility, what had happened in the business firms, who was engaged, what the summer plans were, and if Press, the pet bulldog left behind, would really remember her.

When she laughed, a certain worried, strained little look flew away, and she seemed like a schoolgirl of sixteen. Her right arm affectionately encircled a smaller man, whose light hair was completely dimmed in contrast to her own golden locks. The man's eyes never left her face as he watched the dimples come and go. There was a crinkly look about his eyes, as Rosie Kumpf would have described it; and his lips trembled once when the girl in the middle gave him some careless fling about himself.

"Oh, you both are nice," she of the

yellow hair said warmly, glancing behind to watch Marie and Mammy Lou trudging under a head of baggage, umbrellas, and wraps. "And it's splendid to come home and be met with a truly welcome. After all, three cheers for Uncle Sam!"

"Hip—hip——" began two excellent bass voices.

The baron and Mrs. Montague turned about disapprovingly.

"S-sh!" She suppressed a nervous, little laugh. "The baron is easily shocked. You've got to be careful."

"He looks like a tin soldier," said Stirling mischievously. "Edith, is that the best you could do? Were all the ducal remnants spoken for?"

"Edward Stirling, you can go home by yourself. Dan and I——"

Stirling peeked over in Dan's direction.

"How about it, Dan?" he asked.

"I'm with you," replied that gentleman, with American spirit. "I'd much rather see you come back with a wing or so of Holyrood Castle, or a couple of layers of the Tower tucked under your arm, than—that." And Dan's eyes gleamed with delight as he watched her color rise.

"You are both very rude, both of you, and you need a little of the baron's finish in manner and politeness. Because you've romped through Europe, probably doing all sort of tourist things, you have an idea that a man with a title is not genuine. Well, he is. Very, very much so. And when you know the baron, you'll say I'm right."

Silence on part of young men.

"That is," she postscripted, "if the baron permits you to know him. Foreigners are less effusive, but more sincere."

Groans of repentance. The car door was standing open, and the baron and Mrs. Montague waited inside.

"Jump in, Dan," said Stirling. "I'll help Mammy Lou and Marie into the taxi."

The baron adjusted his eyeglass carefully as Dan landed beside Mrs. Montague with a familiar thump, telling her she had lost at least twenty pounds.

"You dear Danny," murmured Mrs. Montague affectionately. "Edith told me I looked positively loggy."

"A-ah!" muttered the baron, stroking his mustache gingerly.

"Baron Grosskopf, you mustn't mind these boys," Edith volunteered, moving a trifle nearer the baron than was comfortable for Dan to note. "They act respectably when in a large crowd. It's only because we were young things together that they know they can take advantage."

"The baron is going to stay with us for a few days before going West," added Mrs. Montague suavely. "He has large mining interests in Colorado—isn't it, baron?"

"The madame is correct," answered the baron stiffly, his eyes still blinking at Dan, who had appropriated Edith's pocketbook and was telling her it matched her eyes.

"The young people are well acquainted," the baron remarked, trying to be genial. His stilted English was painfully correct.

"That is the way our boys and girls are brought up." Mrs. Montague gave Edith a side glance as she spoke. "Sometimes I fancy your methods are much the better. That is Grant's tomb, baron. We are just a few blocks farther along the drive. Edward, have you seen anything of the Barrels? I heard that Ada was spending a season in the Orient."

"Not a thing. It's a shame I was in Spain while you hugged London so closely. How does the Hudson look, Edith? Anything like the muddy, old Rhine? I've been in Boston for over two months, and I'm prepared for the wildest sort of a frolic to take the curse off. Here we are. Welcome home, Miss Americana. Bounce out, Dan. I'll do the handing out."



"Oh, you both are nice," she said warmly. "And it's splendid to come home and be met with a truly welcome."

The big touring car, and the taxi behind it, had stopped in front of a white stone house. Heads were seen at the windows, and a familiar woof, woof greeted their ears as they waited for Hodson to open the door.

"Oh, Hodson! Oh, Minnie! Oh, Press! Every one of you—Auntie, doesn't it seem heavenly? Why'ee, the hall looks ever so much bigger. I believe it's swelled with pride. I'll never, never go away again. Press Opdyke, you've grown shabby-looking and sullen. When you bark, you sound like a Third Avenue mongrel. I think Danny's abused you. Probably never came to take you for strolls. Hodson, how are the children? Auntie, would you believe there would be such stacks of mail? How in the world did people know——"

The pleasant, little flurry that spelled welcome home lasted until Dan and Edward had taken the traps upstairs themselves, and bullied Edith for a kiss instead of a tip, until Mrs. Montague

looked through the monogrammed envelopes with a smirk of satisfaction, and the Baron Grosskopf was shown to his apartments, until the servants busied themselves getting tea and asking each other if "Miss Edith hadn't grown older-looking," and "If the blond one was *the* one."

Waiting downstairs in the little pink room, Dan and Stirling faced each other frankly for the first time. Press strolled between the two, sticking a moist, black nose into the palm of their hands impartially.

"Now, Slats!"

"Well, String Bean!"

"Come over here before the baron changes his uniform and lands down unexpectedly—come over to me and tell me about Rosie Kumpf."

"S-sh, not so loud! Listen, Dan. I had chills when that boat came in. I saw out of the left corner of my eye that the whole troupe was making for a Sixth Avenue hotel bus. I refused to see any more. Dan, don't freeze up like that. I'm not a cad. Not a bit of a one; and if you had been in my place you—"

"Which I wasn't."

"No. Bad's the luck. But if you had been, you would have done exactly the same thing. In the first place, I'm not in love with any one, and you are. You needn't wince, old man. The whole town knows it, and it's nothing to be ashamed of. If she were a trapeze artist, you'd be trying to keep it dark. Now, wouldn't you? But you're in love with a very high-minded, fine specimen of New York girlhood, who is in sad danger of marrying a tin soldier. So you've every right to set yourself up on a pedestal and hand out idealistic comment by the handful."

"You ought to be horsewhipped for not writing her," commented Dan grimly. "I knew we'd have to have this all out some day. I was wishing at the pier that she would spy you, run frantically in your direction, and give you an old-time Spanish tongue-lashing. That would have been rich."

"It is a peculiar twist, isn't it? But, Dan, I thought she knew that men do

that sort of thing in sheer holiday spirit when—"

"Because she was a music-hall girl? That it? No, I don't think the Shadow Girl—I don't think Miss Kumpf did know."

"Was sorry she bothered you—"

"Oh, I didn't mind. Not at all."

"Edith would be savage at a thing like this, wouldn't she?"

"At you, yes. Going to see her play, Ed?"

Stirling grinned.

"Not if I see myself first. Ye gods! Think of me giving a box party. Imagine if she recognized me."

Dan paced restlessly back and forth.

"Well, there isn't any use in talking it over and over. Only don't try that sort of thing again, Ed. It might end more seriously. Fortunately for you, Rosie Kumpf is a lady, despite her spangled tights and rouge box. I intend calling."

"You!"

"Why not? She wrote to me."

"Now, what would Edith say?"

"Why should that make any difference?"

"Don't think it would shove your game particularly, not with the tin soldier as a rival. Let's switch the talk, Dan. I get that schoolboy feeling chasing up and down my spine when you begin about Rosie. Let's rip the tin soldier to pieces. Honestly, Dan, do you think he stands a show?"

"With Mrs. Montague, yes. With Edith—I don't know." Dan pulled Press' ears until the latter whined reprimandingly.

Stirling walked over and laid his hand on his friend's shoulder.

"Dan, I wish with all my heart that you'll win," he said briefly. "If there's ever anything I can do, I'll be there."

"This is no interruption?" came guardedly from one corner of the room; and, looking up, the men saw the baron's tall figure, clad in afternoon dress, waiting to be invited either in or out.

"No, not at all. Just a friendly chat about nothing—in particular. We're waiting for Mrs. Montague and Edith," Stirling answered quickly.

Dan moved across to the window seat,

where he watched the motor boats chase up and down the blue water. Mechanically he heard Stirling ask polite questions of the baron, whose answers rivaled the original tin soldier for their indefinite quality. By and by, he heard Mrs. Montague rush into the room with a flood of exclamations; and he knew from the rattle of the cups that Hodson had brought tea. Presently Edith came in, dressed in some soft white thing that made her look like a wood sylph. She shook him gently, scolding him for his dreamy, uninterested manner.

He ate small sandwiches and sherbet, all tasting like sawdust, agreeing feebly when Stirling asked the baron to take lunch at their club on Monday. He held Edith's hand a brief moment, and made her promise one of their old walks the next morning, knowing that Mrs. Montague was frowning as she listened to her niece say she would be ready at ten.

Stirling did the farewell speeches, promising that he and Dan would help open the season at Melton Manor, and that the trip abroad had worked wonders with Mrs. Montague's complexion. He climbed into a taxi, and whirled away with vague, very perplexing, memories of a blond baron and an American girl, who seemed to have forgotten all about the Declaration of Independence.

They did not talk as they rode down the drive; Stirling watching his friend carefully, knowing there was little to be said; Dan trying to shove aside his own asinine sentiment and discuss the last stock deal.

"I'll drop off here," Stirling said lightly. "I'm due to make a speech at the meeting next week, and I've got to see Larkin. Where are you going, hermit?"

"The club, I suppose," Dan answered wearily.

"Adios. See you Monday. Read up court manners, and have a clean face."

Dan nodded briefly. Even Stirling's rich, bass voice jarred on him, and he longed to drive on and on and on without speaking, until he had slipped out of the workaday world about him and was in shadow land, where his

thoughts were of his own making, where he would live in an ecstatically happy state of mind, where there were no blond barons or willful American girls to disturb his peace of rest. A sort of grown-up fairy tale, he admitted shamefacedly as the cab reared over toward the avenue.

Impulsively he thrust his head out the window and gave a sharp order to the driver.

"Why not?" he asked himself. "Why not? She said I could."

A smile crossed his face as he pictured Stirling's embarrassment and Edith's perplexed displeasure should they have followed him unawares. For the cab cut corners briskly, whirled down Broadway until it stood thumping and panting in front of the big vaudeville manager's offices. Dan dashed upstairs, threw a card in front of the door guard, and waited anxiously until he was shown inside.

Ten minutes later he tore downstairs, gave the address of a hotel to the driver, and settled back among the cushions with a self-satisfied grin, partly compounded with guilt and confusion.

The St. Elmo Hotel clerk leaned over the counter solicitously, and told the young man in immaculate white flannels that the Krummacher troupe were registered on the seventh floor, and that by sending up a card he would receive immediate attention.

Dan scribbled a line on a card, slipped it in an envelope, and then sat back in a dingy leather chair, mopping his face with a blue-and-white handkerchief that attracted admiring attention.

"In the ladies' parlor, please," said the returning bell hop. "Miss Kumpf is coming down now."

For the life of him, Dan could not have told why he experienced a chilly sensation about the ends of his finger tips, or why he had to swallow twice in order to assure himself of vocal possibilities. On the face of it, a rich, exclusive young New Yorker, making a call on a little German acrobat, was sufficient cause for a good laugh at the club. Yet Dan knew that something more than the acrobatic young lady was



coming to meet him; that the Shadow Girl, to whom he had unburdened his lonesome, thwarted self, was waiting as eagerly, yet as reluctantly, to meet him, to hear his voice, and listen to spoken words.

"Queer stuff," he muttered, swishing his cane across his shoe. "I wonder, now, I really wonder if she will be all I—"

"You would come, you would come, my friend!"

The curious, little, thrilling sound of her low-pitched voice made Dan leap to his feet to stare rudely at the small girl before him. She was clinging to the dusty, green plush curtains, smiling, blushing, sighing all in one. For a moment he saw only her great, dark eyes aglow with excited animation; and then he followed the sweep of the long lashes, which pointed the way to the saucy, well-modeled nose and firm, straight lips, which neither drooped nor curved, but kept in a straight, adorable line, a challenge to see if they could be made to droop or curve. The heavy, black hair was piled high on the small head, with a fanciful, foreign knot in the middle that emphasized the oval face and delicate, shell-like ears.

Dan did not see the cheap suit of plaid goods, or the ill-fitting shoes which she kept drawn back. He only knew that the Shadow Girl was standing before him; and that for the first time in his life—his real life, understand—he could play the shadow game, and play it satisfactorily.

"You," he said slowly, his eyes smiling at her as she had fancied they would smile; "Rosie Kumpf!"

The straight, pink lips parted, and white teeth peeped forth.

"You," she answered, smiling also; "Streng Be-an!"

"Yes, String Bean," he laughed, holding out his hand, as if afraid she would vanish. "String Bean. Please come in, and tell me you are not angry."

She slipped inside the parlor, and sat near him on a small, low chair.

"Angry? For why should I be?"

"Because I called too soon, spoiled our game, our grown-up fairy tale. We

might have been horribly disappointed in each other, you know. I'm not. Are you?"

"Oh, no!" she answered, shaking her head, with its mass of black hair. "But, then, I knew I should not be. That it would be you who would want to go away and stop playing. That is the way of men, Streng Be-an." She laughed again, a dash of mischief in the little gurgle.

"Tell me," began Dan impetuously. He had started to "play" very ardently. "Tell me everything, all about yourself, and your work, and who you are, and what you do, and what you are going to do. Tell me just as if you were writing me a shadow letter. Isn't it glorious, Rosie Kumpf, that you and I can talk our shadow letters?"

"It is wonderful," she told him slowly. "All week crossing the ocean I thought of it, and wondered—forgive me for what I am to say—wondered if you would care to call; or if you, too, would prove only a make-believe. You see, I am not easy to forget things. And I was so afraid you would think it over and regret our shadow understanding; would decide it might be embarrassing for you to know—a Krummacher artist. I am not bitter; just sensible."

He drew his chair closer to hers.

"Rosie Kumpf," he said earnestly, "I'm gladder than you know. I'm only sorry I didn't meet you at the boat."

"Ah, that would never have done! Because our 'family' surely would have embarrassed you. I read people quickly, and you—you are like he was—your friend, Mr. Stirling. You are genuine. Hotel keepers would always charge you ruinous prices." She nodded deliberately as she looked at Dan's white flannels. "No, you should have met rich persons like yourself. Like Miss Opdyke, who made every one on the boat jealous with her Baron Grosskopf!" She noted the change in his face. "Do you know her?" she asked.

Dan drew a long breath. He moved the chair an inch closer. The plaid dress skirt almost touched his hand when he stretched it toward her.

"Listen, Rosie Kumpf," he began

awkwardly. "We must be honest in our shadow world. I did meet the boat you came on—and Miss Opdyke. Met it with your friend, Mr. Stirling. Miss Opdyke asked us to do so. I wasn't quite sure whether you were on it, although the theater papers said you sailed from Havre on the same date. But Mr. Stirling—"

"Please don't finish. I understand. Your friend, Mr. Stirling, was afraid I might see him, and ask questions that ought not to be asked unless one is of the same class. So he hid behind you. And you—you wanted to see her. For she is the girl in the real world. And I am the Shadow Girl. Is that not right, Streeng Be-an?"

The last brought a faint smile to Dan's lips. Her unconscious pronunciation of his nickname of long ago tinged deeper meaning, with a comedy border.

"Yes," he admitted, "that is right."

She shut her eyes for a moment, Dan watching the slight quiver of the white throat.

"Then we understand each other," she said. "Was it not a little strange, my friend, that I should have thought this might be true?"

"About Miss Opdyke?"

"Just that. All the way over I watched her whenever I had a chance. I told myself this was the sort of girl you would love."

Dan drew the pattern of the rug with his cane.

"When do you open here?" he asked, changing the subject abruptly.

"Monday—on Broadway. Then we play in New Jersey and in Philadelphia. After that Herr Krummacher has other plans."

"I'll be there Monday night—why not? You can't refuse a fellow admission, can you? I've as much right as any man, woman, or child with the price of a front-row seat."

"It will spoil it," she declared vehemently. "It will surely spoil it. Spoil our shadow game. Oh, when you see me on the stage doing foolish things, laughing as I do them; when you see Leontine, and Frank, and Herr Krummacher toss me about as if I were a

property girl, and when you watch Mimi, and Olga, and Wanda take me and whirl me in the air—you will think only of the other me; the me that has been with the 'family' for sixteen years, and you will say: 'I am a deluded young man, temporarily carried away by a sympathetic impulse. I am in love, and therefore excusable for many rash things. Let me escape, and let us hope Rosie Kumpf will not deluge me with her—'

"If you're going to talk that way," interrupted Dan, laughing at her earnest, little effort, "I shall turn pirate and carry you off to dinner."

"No, no. You mustn't do that, either. Please, Streeng Be-an, you must be careful. Herr Krummacher would be angry, and the 'family' would say unkind things."

An hour later, a stout, tousled individual, smelling of cabbage and sea salt, and clad in a striped suit of voluminous quantity and abstract quality, appeared in the doorway with a sardonic grin.

"So," he ejaculated, removing a dusty, black skullcap gracefully. "So thou hast callers, Rosie?"

"Herr Krummacher," explained the girl, rising, "Mr. Royal, of New York."

A glint of amusement was visible as she watched the old acrobat stride forward, clutching Dan's hand with a viking grip.

Ten minutes later, Dan made an escape with the promise that he be admitted behind the scenes on Monday night, and the assurance of Herr Krummacher that, should he send up a basket of crawfish of a special Long Island variety, they would not be fed to the bell hops.

Rosie watched the white-figured young man leap into a taxi, waving her hand at him until he disappeared. Then she turned back to Herr Krummacher, trying to put aside her turmoil of thoughts and speak of the new theater world into which they had come.

"We play Hammerstein's," she said lightly. "I am glad. I think—"

The head of the "family" put his hands on her slender shoulders as if he would lift her to the top of the ceiling,



*"But it is true," she said steadily. "Only too true. All I am waiting for, Danny, is for the baron's formal offer of marriage."*

and watch her turn in the air before she came back to his grasp.

"Ah, Rosie Kumpf, Rosie Kumpf!" he said slowly, not unkindly, but with serious meaning. "Thou hast much to learn."

"Have we not all much to learn?" she asked wistfully.

"Ja! But this"—with a wave of his great, firm hand—"this is the hardest for a maiden. For men, they learn easily and forget. But——"

"You do not think," she began timidly, "that I should not know Mr. Royal? That it is not wise?"

"I do not say," the old acrobat answered. "How can I? I, who know nothing of him. But in Spain, Rosie

Kumpf, was the other American who flirted with you, until you grew too nervous to let Mimi hold you in the air, was he a wise acquaintance? You cried at night, did you not? Was he not like this other young man? Are you not always Rosie Kumpf, of the Krummacher troupe?" A softened look came into the straight features, and he patted her gently as he finished: "You must live your own life, after all. Even though we would save people from bad things, they alone can save themselves. For sixteen years you have been with us. And have seen many things happen to many people in that time, have you not? Although you have been a music-hall artist, you have never once known what it was to be treated other than if you were my own daughter.

Is that not so? I am rough, cruel, they say, and cold. But I, too, have a heart within, and that heart has often wished that things might be different for you."

"How different?" She looked at him eagerly.

"I have wished, sometimes when I watched you standing in the wings, timid, afraid to go running on with us, making your bow, and then mounting on high, I have wished that you need not have come to me sixteen years ago to be trained with my 'family.' It would have been more fitting——" He broke off abruptly.

"Herr Krummacher," she said earnestly, "will you tell me who I am? Is

my name really Rosie Kumpf? Did you take me from poor people, who would have starved had you not paid them for me?"

The old man paused perceptibly. Then he said quickly:

"Just so. Rosie Kumpf, baby of my 'family.' And rehearsal to-morrow morning at ten. The rest have wondered where you have fled to. Come, come, this will never make managers ask for long contracts."

### CHAPTER III.

"You look as if you had a head full of weird ideas," remarked Edith the next morning. "I don't intend to go walking with a young man whose thoughts are not Sabbathlike. Seeing that auntie and the baron are still keen on rest, and that Edward Stirling is coming to dinner, I hope you appreciate that——"

"That you, prospective baroness, have deigned to go a-walking with one mongrel New York merchant. I do. Properly and humbly chastened for having smiled upon greeting you, I now escort you to the open."

As they left the house, Dan drew her arm within his.

"Now, then," he began easily, "I want to hear all about it—from the very first."

"About what?" She turned her head away so that the big hat shaded her face.

"About the tin soldier. You don't suppose I'm going to accept a flimsy story about Lady Annesley Meade-Chaffee's introducing him to your aunt, and your aunt entertaining him merely as a friendly return for courtesies shown her abroad. Not much. I want the bare, unvarnished truth. We're on native soil, dear lady. Out with it!"

"You haven't finished all you intended saying," she answered coldly.

"Perhaps you think I won't?" Dan's eyes crinkled with amusement. "Is it true that you are going to marry the baron? That you, too, like Lois Grenville and Emma Gowans, are going to sell your birthright for a mess of pot-

tage? Are the nasty, unreliable, little stories in the scandal sheets true?"

"Perhaps," came quickly from the depths of the light hat, "if the baron asks me."

"You don't doubt but what he will? I'm not up on blue-blood etiquette of how long an acquaintance is required."

Dan's lips curled scornfully; and there was a suspicion of enjoyment in his face as he watched the chin quiver under the big hat.

"I don't know," she answered quietly. "He may not. He has never made love to me yet."

"You surely don't expect that? Your part in the game will be a triumphant sort of marriage thing, with columns in the yellow journals and telegraph stories sent out to Oshkosh and Painted Post. Then you'll go abroad and meet his people; the people who weigh their words to you in return for equal measure, good American dollars. You'll be sent down to the country estates—you are to restore them, you know—estates with poor drains, and no rocking-chairs, and flaring, gloomy candelabras instead of a decent reading lamp. It sounds like a housekeeper's inventory; but it'll seem paramount after you've been there a little. You'll be laughed at and snubbed by the country gentility, ignored by the old family servants; used as a cat's-paw for the gentlemen of the family to pay their gambling debts, and furnish them with *carte blanche* when life grows tiresome and they are in danger of ennui."

They walked on in silence, Dan's heels digging into the soft, spring turf.

Presently he burst out:

"And this is what our American women court. This is why they are taken abroad. Like white slaves into the market place of an Indian rajah. International marriage. International barter. Who blames these men, with their shady pasts and their contempt for Americans? Our women invite such alliances, go after them, pursue them to the end. You, the type of American women who should help cry shame on the others, you bring this man to your own home in hopes he may ask

you to be his banker, his drudge, his legal slave. You are not a child, Edith. You surely are not dazzled by a uniform and an unpronounceable name. You've grown up from fairy tales of lords and ladies and satin-lined coaches with four white horses. You are not cold-blooded, either. Not if you can't love me. Oh, I'm not making a selfish plea! Even if you hate me when I've finished. If you haven't a father or a brother to stand by and tell you the glaring truth, I'm going to. You can't deny me that privilege."

They had reached a bench removed from the drive, isolated from the customary Sunday-morning loungers. Edith dropped into it wearily. She still kept her face turned away from him. Dan stood beside her grimly.

"Please sit down, Danny," she said faintly. "You are taking this far too seriously."

"You won't think so five years from now," he answered.

"Perhaps not. Perhaps I don't care to have you 'stand by and tell me the glaring truth.' I haven't asked for it, you know."

Dan dropped miserably beside her on the wooden bench.

"I must have sounded rough," he confessed; "but it took the starch out of me to hear you say that you'd marry the man. Edith, you were joking. Tell me it isn't true."

"But it is true," she said steadily. "Only too true. All I am waiting for, Danny, is for the baron's formal offer of marriage."

Dan bit his lips to keep back the angry retort. Presently he asked:

"How do you know he's genuine? Surely you could have picked up something better than a pauper baron in eight months of search. They're almost as common as French counts."

"Danny, do you think that sort of talking helps any?"

The little break in her voice caused Dan to look at her sharply.

"Look at me," he urged gently. "Tell me what's the real row. You don't suppose I'm bluffed into believing that

you are happy. You can't bluff yourself into caring for—him?"

Her blue eyes met his with a suggestion of merry scorn.

"No," she reassured him. "In that much, Danny, I will approve of you. I do not love the baron."

"And you can't tell me that Edith Opdyke cares a hang for the frills of a tattered aristocracy. You've too much of the throb of Dixie in your blood. Too many generations of sturdy Yankee ancestors. Now, what is it?"

She drew a little cross in the budding green grass with the tip of her parasol.

"Well," she said slowly, "I think you have a right to know. So I am going to tell you the truth. We are too good friends to lie. I have thought it out so many, many times that it seems very simple to me. It is just this way. Every one in the world loves some one at some time or other. That a man or woman can exist without caring deeply for some one else is not possible. But we cannot all be happy in that love. Some of us must be shipwrecked. We are either loved by some one whom we cannot love in return, or else we care for some one who does not care for us. That is why I am willing to marry the baron. Because the person I have always loved has never once loved me, and never will. It's just plain hopeless; and I don't propose to make a bad mess of things because of it. If one cannot have love, one can have a career. Why not make marriage a career, Dan? Is there any harm in that?"

"Edith, are you sure the—the other person does not care?" Dan's eyes met hers in sympathetic understanding.

"Quite sure."

"And you have cared—long?"

"Ages. Lifetimes ago, I sometimes think. He's been my fairy prince, my shadow man—"

"Shadow man?" Dan was jerked out of his alarm by the words.

"Yes." She was smiling at him.

"We all have shadows, don't you think? Even the most prosaic of us. Some won't admit it. Others may not realize it, but they are with us. Auntie has hers in imagining our life abroad, my

marriage to the baron. She lives in that dream. The baron has his in the thought of his estates being restored, and the old-time, prosperous life of the castle made an actual fact. You have yours in——"

"Thinking of the woman I love," Dan finished. "And you have yours in wondering how the man you care for will come to care for you. You haven't given up hope, dear. We never give up hope in the shadow world. There are all things possible, all ages of miracles are near at hand. We all have our shadows; soft, gray, splashy things. Sometimes subtle and elusive, sometimes with dashes of color and rainbows at the end. Thank God for shadow life! It takes the place of a fairy kingdom, and the comforting belief in a Santa Claus and an Easter bunny!"

There was a moment's pause. By and by Edith ventured:

"We've been gone a long time, Danny. Hadn't we better get a bus back? It's such fun to ride on top."

"But you won't marry the baron without thinking it over, all over?" He caught her hands firmly. "You promise me that much, Edith?"

"I promise," she said listlessly. "if you promise me never, never to tell me you love me. Oh, Danny, every time you came to me, I thought of the—other one. Your words stung like hot irons. You don't know how hard it was to listen. Harder than for you to be sent away."

"Perhaps"—he had taken her parasol, and was twitching it in the air—"I shouldn't have annoyed you if I had known. I'm not as weak as all that. But I never suspected."

"I never felt I could tell you before. You would have taken it so differently. But you do seem changed. All your rage at the baron wasn't a lover's rage, Danny. It was a real friend's just indignation. You are different. As if you had met some one else."

The swift vision of a dark-eyed, black-haired girl, with straight, red lips, came to Dan; and her tantalizing, laughable pronunciation of "String Bean"

seemed to be whispered in his ear. He did not answer.

Edith rose abruptly.

"I wish with all my heart that you have," she added. "Now, come along, and let's forget what we've told each other."

When they reached Edith's home Stirling was watching them at the window.

"There he is," laughed Edith. "On time for once. Of all the lackadaisical old chaps, he is the worst. Sometimes I wonder if he is ever really interested in anything. Imagine him at forty!"

"He needs to love some one," Dan diagnosed, waving his hand at the object of discussion. "I bet the baron's been bored to death listening to him ask questions."

"You think he ever will?"

"Love some one? Of course! You just said none of us could escape." Dan looked at her in amusement. Then his expression changed. "Edith—Stirling—he isn't the one——"

Hodson opened the door.

"Come on in, Danny," she said merrily, "and tell him how you nearly fell into the river trying to count motor boats. Hello, Edward! On time. Baron Grosskopf, you must think me very rude, but we forget there was such a thing as a clock. Eight months of scandal to catch up on! Is it any wonder? Has auntie come down yet? Oh, flowers! Danny, you are an extravagant boy——"

But Dan stood in the hall listening to her frivolous chatter.

"Stirling!" he repeated to himself, forgetful of the waiting Hodson. "Stirling, the shadow prince!" A scarcely perceptible look of amused relief came over his face; then it grew grave. "And he's romped through twenty-nine years without a serious thought, played teasing brother to Edith when—and she cares for him! Then I'll make him care for her if I have to threaten him with blackmail from Rosie Kumpf!"

"Danny," Edith called impatiently, "the baron is going to tell us all about



fox hunting. Come along, and stop pouting."

"Stirling!"

Dan's face was a study in composite expression. But he slipped into an obscure corner of the drawing-room to listen politely to a labored explanation of obsolete German customs.

#### CHAPTER IV.

The stage doorman let the young man in evening dress pass through the dusty corridor. He grinned as he watched him brush against spider webs and uncertain walls.

"He's for one of the Krummacher bunch," he told a stage hand. "That's Daniel Royal, junior partner of the big iron company. Watch him. He didn't bring no flowers, either."

With a warning scowl, Herr Krummacher admitted him to the coop of a dressing room.

"It is Rosie Kumpf. Yes?" he asked, his heavy eyebrows drawing together in a frown.

"Please!" Dan's nonchalance rather disarmed the ponderous personage.

"Then wait here. She is dressing yet. And talk to her but for a short time, if you please yourself."

Herr Krummacher became badly tangled with his English as he watched the easy movements of the young gentleman, who strolled about to gaze at lithograph posters of circus riders and child impersonators. Outside, the rush and throb of the theater were heard. Yelling on the part of an irate manager, an occasional shrill laugh from women performers, and the nerve-wracking tuning of the orchestra.

"I'll wait. There's no hurry." Dan smiled as he spoke.

Five minutes later, Rosie Kumpf, clad in a shimmering, gray kimono that covered her from her slender little shoulders to the small red-slippered feet, stood before him, laughing, blushing. Through the heavy make-up, Dan saw the same bewitching dimples glancing out at him. Not even the heavy eye pencil or the rouge could dim the natu-

ral sweep of the long lashes or the dainty color.

"Well, Shadow Man?" She tilted her head coquettishly as she spoke. "So you have come. You would come to see your shadow world destroyed. Here am I, dressed in circus clothes such as women you know would disapprove of, all painted, and powdered, and very uncomfortable, all ready to go before the big audience, and manage not to break my neck. Well?" She laughed nervously.

"I don't see much difference between your costume and that worn at the cotillions," Dan drawled. "Except you've a little less of the powder, and you're infinitely better to look at."

She sat down on an old, broken chair, her dark, velvety eyes looking up at him until his own seemed to catch the subtle thrill that lay hidden in their depths.

"And you will persist in seeing our act?" The brown eyes looked disappointed.

"Unless I have a seizure. Why not? It isn't fair to hound me about it. I want to see *you*. You don't suppose I care about the rest?"

One small red slipper crept out from its gray covering. It tapped impatiently on the floor.

"I don't want you to," she pouted. "I didn't want to see you at all. You spoil our shadow letters, our——"

"Now, if you're going to start that," Dan interrupted rudely, "I'm going to call Herr Krummacher, and tell him you said all kinds of things about his act being a fake—fake cannon balls, fake slides, fake——"

She was laughing at him as she shook her head.

"Ah, you can never have anything but your own way," she said quaintly. "Very well. Watch me. See how the crowd shouts when I jump through the air—straight—so—never quite sure that Mimi will grasp me when I reach the end of the stage. Have it your own way, Streeng Be-an."

"Thanks. So far I've won my way forward. What did you do yesterday? I thought about you."

We rehearsed. Then I was too tired

to go out with Mimi and Olga. They took a ride all over your city to see the tall buildings. Myself, I did not care about them. But in the evening we went down Broadway to see the people. Oh, you Americans are so funny. You should know Berlin on a Sunday night. That is life."

"You have the European habit of knocking, I see. The Baron Grosskopf started along similar lines. He gave a long lecture yesterday on the lack of manners. Very interesting."

The red slipper was drawn back.

"So you were at—at her home?"

"Yes. We had dinner there. Mr. Stirling was there, too."

Dan looked at her sharply as he spoke.

"So?"

There was no expression in her cold little exclamation.

"Yes. Listen, Rosie Kumpf. I'm mentioning his name to you freely because you must become used to it. It's bad policy to dread hearing people's names mentioned. Don't you understand? To have a dull horror of seeing places and things because of associations? That starts serious trouble sometimes; and I don't believe in letting them get a grip on you. So I'm going to talk about Edward Stirling to you freely, as if you and he had never had a minor, unimportant little affair in old Spain. And you will thank me for it. If we avoided his name and went around corners in conversation with awkward phrases and explanations to refrain from mentioning it, you would find a slow-growing resentment toward him; a festering, gradual bitterness of the episode. And that would be bad."

"I understand, Streng Be-an," She put one small hand on his as she spoke. "You are a sensible Shadow Man, after all. But I do not feel that way about Mr. Stirling; really, I do not. I promise to listen whenever you talk about him, and to be glad whenever good things come to him. Why should I not? There is no feeling in my heart about him. Oh, it has always seemed to me that many women make their minds little graveyards for all their disappointed,

thwarted loves. They keep going over and over them, like a sexton caring for graves. That is why they find no peace."

Cries of "all off" were heard outside. Some one thumped vigorously on the door.

"I must go," she finished. "And you—you still wish to be in front?"

"As fast as I can get there, Rosie Kumpf." Dan looked at her admiringly as she rose. "I suppose a shadow pal wouldn't be allowed behind after—"

"Never, Streng Be-an!" She stamped her red slipper indignantly. "To the hotel we are bundled, ever so quick. Mimi and some of them have crackers and beer, and the rest of us wash off the grease paint, and tumble into bed, glad to get there and forget the night's work. Oh, Streng Be-an, never must you hint at that. It would be bad if Herr Krummacher should hear you ask it."

"I won't. Don't worry. I've got to order endless crawfish as it is. He looked very growly at me to-night, and it's only eight o'clock. But you—you understand, don't you?" There was a wistfulness in his voice.

"I understand," she answered. "I understand about it—all. About Her," she added, noting that he winced.

"Do you think it's a good season to open here?" he asked abruptly.

"You must learn to hear her name mentioned as freely as I must hear Mr. Stirling's," she retorted quickly. "It is bad for you to nurse that morbid little infatuation as you do. See, you told me the truth. Why should I not tell you? Mention her. Become able to control disappointed love until it change to admiration, friendship. Oh, Streng Be-an, surely you can do as much."

Stirling grasped her hands.

"You are—a pal," he said softly. "But, really, you don't know how my thoughts ran just then—when I mentioned her. You might have been surprised."

The look in her eyes made him draw his hands away.

"Be careful," she warned. "Shad-

ows, like soap bubbles, are ruined forever once they are broken."

"Rosie, thou art late," roared Herr Krummacher in a heavy bass.

Dan opened the door with a flourish. "A thousand pardons," he told the head of the "family." "It was my fault entirely. But wait until you see the sea food we get at the Fulton Market. Large, juicy, delicious. I wager you never ate anything half as good."

The twinkle in Rosie Kumpf's brown eyes made Stirling's mouth twitch as he showed Herr Krummacher his seat check.

"Until to-morrow," he whispered, passing by the little gray figure.

The first stage sight of the Shadow Girl clad in red silk tights and fascinating slippers gave Dan a sense of horror. To think she must come before a crowd of careless men and women, risk her life for their amusement, the same as a circus clown. He watched her climb the trapeze, smiling, dimpling at the house in front; saw her dainty arms outstretched, throwing kisses to the leader of the orchestra, to the box parties, the gallery jury; looked at her slender, graceful body being twirled in the air by Leontine, and set down as carelessly as if she were a stage property instead of a living, beautiful woman. He felt a thrill of terror when she made her famous dive through the air, and he heard the crackling of her muscles as Mimi's large hands caught her tiny ones, and the orchestra burst into a wild Russian dance. The thud of applause made him faint. His eyes were dull and heavy as he lifted them to the tiny, tantalizing, red figure perched on high, still smiling and calling out broken-English phrases to the admiring public.

The rest of the troupe did their work without a quiver of emotion from the solitary young man in front. That Herr Krummacher lifted them all on his massive, powerful frame did not bring forth a handclap. Not until the same small figure climbed merrily on top of the others, and stood there, poised, trembling with excitement, her cheeks flushed, her head throbbing, praying that the ten seconds of peril be over and

no bones broken. Then Dan led the applause.

They ran in front, and off at the side, with a flourish from the orchestra and a series of exaggerated bows, the little red figure next to the last.

A woman dressed as a Swiss bell ringer came on to give impersonations of foreign peasants. Dan rose, and rudely pushed by the people next him. He was going behind to see her. He didn't care for a thousand Herr Krum-machers. He was going to see her, to tell her she must stop this sort of thing. It was impossible for her to endure it. To think that any man, woman, or child with the price of admission could applaud or hiss her, and she must bow and smile! A sense of protection for her possessed him. Rosie Kumpf, Shadow Girl!

The doorman laughed as he watched him stride down the narrow hall. Three minutes later, he laughed again as he saw him stride back with hurried step.

"I thought the herr wasn't to be trifled with," he chuckled as the junior partner darted into the night.

## CHAPTER V.

It was very easy that week to drop in at the theater twice a day, once before the afternoon performance, once at night. Herr Krummacher, supplied with crawfish and cigars, smiled indulgently when the rest of his "family" protested; and even defended the caller as far as his Teutonic conscience would permit.

"As long as Rosie gets not the tearful attitude, I shall not interfere," he told Leontine, whose hot-headed French blood made him jealous of the stranger.

There was so much to say in the short intervals between each performance, so much to talk over and discuss. And the troupe went out of New York on Sunday to play three weeks in Jersey and Philadelphia.

"But you must not come after," warned Rosie Kumpf, who knew that the Shadow Man would come, and that she would be disappointed if he did not.

"Not just for one day?" begged Dan.



*The "family" thawed under American hospitality.*

"Not just for one day. Now tell me about the baron and Miss Opdyke; then about Mr. Stirling. You see, we punish each other. We take away all the sting, and then the other eight and a half minutes we can talk as we will."

"I'm afraid the baron will win," said Dan gloomily. "And it's going to be bad if he does. I can't quite stand the idea."

"Of course not," she said softly. "It must hurt, my friend."

"Not the way you think," he objected. "Truly, I mean that. Ever since Edith came back it has been different. I

haven't cared in the same way. I've learned something new. Two things new. One from her. The other from one——"

"There are good fire escapes on this theater. Better than in Spain."

"The other from you," finished Dan quietly. "And so I don't need any stringent punishing to-night. Funny sort of a job, isn't it? The principle that two negatives make a positive." He laughed nervously.

"There is a child here this week who has never been to school at——"

"Stop!" Dan's tone was rough.

"You don't suppose I want a detailed account of every performer in the place when we've only a few minutes to talk to each other. If you won't talk about yourself, let us talk about ourselves."

She suppressed a smile.

"Of course, if your interest is not holding, I am sorry." She was adorable when she tried to pout. "Then you really think Miss Opdyke will marry the baron? He is well known abroad, of a very honorable family, Streeng Be-an."

"Well known to creditors," grumbled Dan. "If I had a sister, I wouldn't let her marry one of your tarnished dudes if I did a little sword-swallowing act first. I wouldn't marry a woman that had a trace of nobility about her if I lived and died a hermit in the Black Forest. I hate the whole bunch. I'm a rank American. I'm going to work myself up in public favor, and get sentenced to Congress, where I can pass a bill forbidding those damned international marriages. Excuse me, Rosie Kumpf; but it does make me see red spots. Now you see my real disposition."

"But sometimes there may be love," she suggested.

"Love! Love that is weighed out in bank notes and mortgage bonds? A love that is murdered by the commercial import attached to it. Love? You know better than that, Rosie Kumpf. You know you do, too. Want to get me all enraged, and then laugh. Oh, I know."

"But sometimes there might be. The men are not all cold and dissipated." There was a sturdy strain of loyalty to her own people that amused Dan. "And your women—they know, do they not, what these marriages might mean? You American people pride yourselves on teaching girls the broader, bigger side of life, on sending them to colleges and universities, where they see the world without the veiled curtains of a debutante's boudoir. Then you accuse our men of duping young innocence. Ah, Streeng Be-an, play fair! You know as well as I that the women are to blame also. They are not kept like our

girls, secluded, timid of every one who speaks to them. No. I blame your girls as much as our 'tarnished dudes.' It is their fault. They lay the trap."

"And the hungry rats walk into it, glad of the bait." Dan's mouth was in a straight line.

"Very well, Streeng Be-an. I shall not quarrel with you." The gray kimono was pulled defiantly about her little shoulders. "Besides, I must go. Only if you loved a woman, even were she a princess, you would break through every convention and precedent you had ever revered to win her. So!"

Saturday night Dan had asked permission of Herr Krummacher to entertain his "family" at supper. He had not attended any of the performances since the first. He preferred to think of Rosie Kumpf in her gray kimono, her simple street dress, without the glare of the footlights.

Herr Krummacher consented amiably, and, after a pretense at a scolding from Rosie Kumpf, Dan ordered a royal spread at the Sixth Avenue hotel, and prepared to play the host palatial. The "family" were in awe of the young man who laughed so like a boy and said all manner of funny, flippant things in a daring manner to Herr Krummacher; who looked at their Rosie with an expression that made Mimi's world-wise head nod sagely, and Leontine swear under his breath; who seemed to have all the money that one could wish for, and yet was polite and jocular at the same time.

After they had eaten and the men were smoking, the "family" thawed under American hospitality, and Mimi was coaxed to tell stories of traveling through Persia and Turkey, often stopped by brigands. Herr Krummacher relaxed from his usual severity, and related incidents of his early boyhood, his apprenticeship at the work in Austria. He rolled up his sleeves to show telltale, whitened scars on the powerful arms, mementos of past mistakes and their punishment.

Only Rosie Kumpf sat alone, silent and serious, watching her companions and the man at the head of the table.

Her hands were clenched tightly in her lap, and a confused film of places and people passed through her mind as she listened to Herr Krummacher tell of his one appearance before royalty.

A stir of resentment against the Shadow Man's attitude toward the baron crept into her mind. A strange, unaccountable loyalty toward his honor, his motives made the blood mount into her cheeks; and she held her head high in the air as she thought of the American parvenu and her jealously guarded moneybags. Then she laughed. Herr Krummacher thought she laughed at the joke he was telling. But it was a bitter little laugh, because she realized that it was only in the shadow world she could hold her head high and act royal. She was merely Rosie Kumpf, acrobat, eating a rich man's supper that he had bought in the generous, condescending spirit of good-fellowship and sympathy.

The "family" were profuse in thanks to their host. Herr Krummacher mentioned that Jersey trains could be easily boarded. But, when Dan and the Shadow Girl stood alone in the room, after the others had discreetly retired, she told him again he must not come. That she would see him next where he least expected. Until then he must wait.

"I shan't come to see you," he began, in a bantering manner. "I'm going to take muscle exercises with Herr Krummacher."

"Please, my friend, be serious, and do not come. You shall see me soon enough."

"When, where, how, who?" Manlike, the mystery attracted him.

"Then it would be a secret no longer. Believe me, you shall see me, and then I shall know."

"Know what?"

"Whether you are my real friend. Forgive me," she added quickly as the expression of reproach crossed his face, "but in this strange country, where women ask men to marry them, and men—forgive me, Streeng Be-an," she coaxed, "I do not doubt you very much. Only you and I are shadow people, and we have not yet proven that we can stand the sunlight on each other. Now

are you satisfied? Just wait the three weeks, and then see. You will understand what I meant."

Unwilling, he began to beg his cause; but the little lady in her blue dress was unbendable, and he contented himself with a promise of seeing her at the train, and of letters; many, many letters.

"Before we say good-by—our good-by—will you tell me why they called you Streeng Be-an?"

"You surely want to know?" he said slowly, his eyes growing serious.

"Quite sure. I knew there was a reason."

"It isn't much, and it isn't pretty to tell. Let me see if I can doll it up for you. No, I can't. You'll have to listen to the ugly truth. When I was a very little tad, three or four years old, my mother died in New England. We lived on one of those crazy, abandoned farms where only rocks can be gathered periodically. My father was a useless, Rip Van Winkle sort of chap, and had made it hard—for her. He died soon after I came. Somehow she struggled along. She had married against every one's wish. You know how that sort of thing goes. My uncle, the late Daniel Royal, refused to write her. When she died, all she left was me, a helpless, little bundle of humanity whom nobody wanted, least of all the man for whom I was named.

"I wasn't old enough to be bound out, and the good-hearted farmers who have always room for one more only exist in storybooks, Rosie Kumpf. I think we'll have to give 'em a special place in our shadow world. So they took me to an—institution. It was one of the isolated kind run by the State, and escaping inspection. Not even a kindly, fussy board of women to come around and howl about the soup being sterilized. They had written my uncle, but no answer came. He was living abroad at the time.

"I almost died at the place. They didn't beat me or outwardly abuse me; and no one could possibly get a case against them. Only they neglected me.

"When I was five years old, I had a



fall and broke my leg. It was stiff for a long time. Then they began calling me String Bean; a sort of pleasant reminder that I wasn't a credit to their charity. I used to cry about that, along with other things. I was a rebellious chap even then, Rosie Kumpf. I seemed to grow thinner and paler until they had hopes of my vanishing altogether before spring. Only a crowd of rich New Yorkers camped there that summer, and came over to the joint out of idle curiosity. Somebody was maudlin enough to say it wasn't properly conducted, and that called an investigation. Somebody else saw my name on the books, and remembered whom my mother had married, and somebody else that had influence told Daniel Royal his sister's boy was starving in a New England almshouse. Pride often does what duty fails to accomplish, Rosie Kumpf.

"I was brought to New York, a thin, scared mite, with the nickname of String Bean attached permanently. I was sent to play with children such as Ed Stirling and Edith; well-fed, petted youngsters, showered with love. At first I used to cry and hide rather than be with them. But by degrees it wore off, and I became used to the fat of the land, demanding it imperiously. My uncle died soon after, and I took his name. A few hospitals and second cousins cursed my memory because I caused the will to read in my favor. At the time, I didn't appreciate the rare humor of it. I had the unhappy faculty of a good memory, that brought home every night spent in the ramshackle building on a cold, lumpy cot, with a hungry stomach and an aching, wondering heart. You see, Rosie Kumpf, I have had need of shadows."

She laid her head on his shoulder impulsively as she sobbed:

"Streen Be-an. Oh, you let me call you that, and I never knew! I never dreamed you had ever gone hungry or been unhappy like that. I understand. I know. You, too, suffered when you were young. We people that have done that know each other without introductions. It leaves the mark on all of us that leads us to each other."

## CHAPTER VI.

"Where have you been keeping yourself?" Mrs. Montague asked indulgently, as Dan made his apologies to Press by a friendly gripping of the ears and sturdy pats. "Edith said it was overwork. This hot weather drives work away from every one, I should think. You don't know what an effort it is to open the manor."

"Must be. I haven't been polite; been awfully tied up with things and rather drifting this last week. Then I thought you would be pretty busy with plans, and—the baron."

Mrs. Montague's trained eye searched him, trying to read his thoughts.

"Of course, Edith has been monopolized," she said confidentially. "Not but what I am glad, Danny, dear, because it will be a wonderful thing for her. Only she seems tired out, weary of everything for which she ought to be glad."

Dan rumbled a rug at his feet.

"You think it's a go?" he asked, with a bluntness that jarred on Mrs. Montague's nerves.

"Dan, don't talk about it as if it were a business deal."

"What else is it?" He rose to pace the floor. "Oh, I'm not fighting for myself. I loved Edith a good many years, and I love her now—but not the same. I'm no longer dangerous. It isn't that. It's because I'm opposed to selling our girls to a worn-out title that needs resetting."

"I knew you would take this attitude." The iciness of her tone delighted Dan. "Edward Stirling said the same thing to me; and the Mayo girls actually tried to influence her to take up settlement work. But you can't change fate. I am a staunch believer in that."

Mrs. Montague's moonlike face was flushed with excitement.

"No, you can't," Dan answered sullenly. "Well, I'm not going to keep on expressing uncalled-for opinions. I'll dance at her wedding with all the gusto of young America if you think it's going to make her happy. Has he proposed yet?" he added, with the privilege of a boyhood friend.

"Not yet." A slight cloud came over the white forehead. "But he's leaving to-night for Colorado. Then he returns in time for our kermis at the manor. Then——" A significant pause.

Dan smiled at her.

"You have played your game pretty well," he admitted jocularly. "Look out that he hasn't a great-uncle in the same boat."

Mrs. Montague tried to frown, but changed into a pleased smile as Edith came in with outstretched hands.

"Truant! Edward said you were in love. I said it was work. Which?"

"Neither. I'm taking a vacation by degrees."

Fifteen minutes later, Dan faced Edith alone to ask her how things were going.

"You look white and tired, as if you wanted to creep off to the country and don a gingham dress and a sunbonnet. It hasn't made you happy so far, has it? Or to forget?"

"He's leaving for the West to-night," she said coldly. "And, when he comes back, I suppose—— Oh, I don't know. He hasn't acted like a suitor. He has never said a sentimental word to me. He's listened to auntie rattle on about my income, and about Melton Manor. She's going to do all sorts of foolish things to make a showing there. Danny, I hate it. I hate myself. I don't exactly hate the baron. I won't begin active hating until he formally proposes. You see—he still has a chance to retrieve." She laughed nervously. "Sometimes I think he has some terrible secret trouble that he broods over. Once I wondered if he could have come to America because of it. He seems to be a man with a restless conscience underneath his calm, cold front. And he only tolerates me. Danny, I can't ask him to marry me. I feel as if I were labeled: 'Worth one million dollars—references furnished upon request.'" She clenched her hands together tightly.

"Have you made sure that the other—doesn't care?"

She turned away abruptly.

"Quite sure, Danny, quite sure."

He laid his hand on her arm tenderly.

"I'd give the world to help you, Edith. To save you from this other thing. I hope the baron bumps into his last wife and twins on the way between here and Colorado."

She smiled through her tears.

"Danny, you're the piece of candy we used to be given after we swallowed the nasty medicine. I can sit at the farewell dinner to-night knowing all New York is whispering about me and smile, because you take away the bad taste."

The three weeks of playing in Jersey and Philadelphia by the Krummacker troupe were broken into twice. Once by the bold and totally uncalled-for invasion by one Daniel Royal, gentleman at large, who came behind the scenes at Heith's Theater carrying a basket of flowers almost as large as Rosie Kumpf herself, and who stayed to talk with the "family," as well as with the Shadow Girl, until a late train went that night. The second invasion was by a handsome, black-haired man, who hesitated timidly before the doorkeeper.

After some delay, he was admitted into a dingy anteroom, where he found himself face to face with a small girl dressed in a simple gingham frock.

"Why have you dared to come, Mr. Stirling?" she asked, with her quaint twist to the English language. "You and I have no liking for each other now, have we? Who sent you—Mr. Royal?"

"I sent myself," Stirling answered soberly. "I've been sending myself ever since I knew you came to America. I've been saying: 'Gird up your strength and apologize to her. She'll be fair enough to understand that all puppies have to chew soap at some stage of the game.' But when I came to mind my own command I lacked moral courage. You see, I'm making a big appeal for mercy."

"And for what?" Still the blue-gingham figure did not move from its standing position. "Why should you apologize now?"

"For being a cad. For making you feel as I did. Rosie, I never once dreamed you meant it."

"Please!" One hand was held up

sharply before his troubled face. "Oh, please, Mr. Stirling, do not bother apologizing. Take the same time in which to learn being serious. You hurt me badly, very badly, at the time. But perhaps I, too, was at the soap-chewing stage, as you call it. I, too, was young and foolish, and easily led away from what I ought to have known was hard, common sense. That is true of all of us at some time, is it not? Streeng Be-an says so."

"String who?" Stirling let his walking stick reach the floor.

"Your friend, Mr. Royal, to whom I wrote when I felt so unhappy. He has been very kind to me since I came to America."

"Yes, of course, of course." Stirling's face flushed.

She nodded. "He was here last week. Did you know that?"

"Dan Royal—to see you?"

"And why not?"

"Oh, I say, he mustn't, Rosie! You mustn't let him come. It isn't—"

"It was fair in Barcelona." The fire in her eyes warned him.

"But that——"

"Was just the same. Only you were on safe ground, and never dreamed I would come to your country, or would listen twice to your words. Once when you spoke them, and once after you went away, and they echoed in my heart. Well, I did. And I came to your country, and met your friend. He is my friend now."

Stirling's lips twitched with impatience.

"Then he is a poor friend. I tell you the thing is impossible. I am going to tell Royal what I think. I am not going to see you made unhappy twice."

"You!" She laughed mockingly. "You! Oh, you are like all the rest of the men in the world; the men before the curtain, the men behind it. There is no difference. You are the exception; the one who makes everything different. You are younger even than I. For I know there are no exceptions. You need not be afraid of your friend. We understand. He does not make love to me as you once did."

"It's none of my business, of course." Stirling jerked his coat together angrily as he spoke. "And I probably deserve your denouncement of men. But I'm sorry for something that's done with and over, and which I cannot undo. I want to save you from a thing that looks to me to be the same. Rosie, it's a raw thing to say to you. Dan Royal loves another girl."

"That I know," she answered simply. "He has even told me her name. You see, he trusts me."

Stirling gasped.

"Dan has told you—that?"

"And many more things. Indeed, you need not feel you must protect me. We understand each other—as well as we understand you."

The flush died out of his face, leaving it a dead white.

"What do you mean?" he asked quietly. "What do you mean?"

"We both know that you must experience real love before you can stop these flirtations which bring unhappiness to others. I am not actually angry at you. I should not have seen you had I been. That, too, you must thank your friend for; it was he who showed me the truth of the incident. But we know that you must care for some one else beside your own self. That is what you need, Mr. Stirling. You are so engrossed in your own personage that all others must revolve about it like the sun and his planet courtiers. You understand?"

She tilted her dark head back as she finished, the eyes sparkling with earnestness.

Still the dead whiteness in Stirling's face.

"You and Dan Royal think that?" he asked piteously.

She nodded.

"Only last week we talked of it. This is not a usual end to a stage flirtation, is it? Many, many times have I seen girls plan and think such bitter, unkind things against people who have flattered them for the moment. It has always seemed foolish. There is nothing so dead as a dead infatuation. Is that not true? And stage infatuations will never content themselves to be buried nicely, with

a tombstone telling the date, and age, and all the rest of the nice, placid, settled things that make the mourner feel the contents to be at actual rest. But with you and I, it is different. My vanity was badly scratched. That was all. And my woman's anger did flare up, and I willfully misnamed it 'injured feelings.' Then through you I came to know your friend. And we have had no such affair. So we are happy. Now I want to help you. Really help you. So I tell you this truth—"

Stirling looked at her with an odd, little smile.

"Rosie Kumpf, I didn't half understand you back in old Spain, did I?"

She shook her head.

"No. You saw only a lonesome girl, who laughed at your funny stories, and drank chocolate, and wore roses. You merely knew the unhappy, fanciful acrobat who hated her work and associates, and who clung to you as the shipwrecked people cling to uncertain spars."

"It isn't too late to understand you now," he added, in an undertone, "or to prove to you I do. If Daniel Royal trusted you that far, I will trust you even farther. I will tell you the cause of this outward fickleness, this lackadaisical attitude toward things worth while that makes my friends feel like giving me water cures and that sort of thing. I love—and always have loved—the same girl Dan Royal has. Dan Royal has been my comrade ever since he came to New York, a frightened little beggar from the New England backwoods. There is an honor between men, Rosie, that is stronger than the love between a man and woman. I never even tried to find out if I stood a chance with her. I made myself laugh at the thought, and try in every way to play up Dan against my own shortcomings. It wasn't hard at that. Now that Dan finds he's losing ground in the face of a miserable title, I'm not going to be cad enough to cut in and make a last stab. I tell you, I haven't even let myself know if I could or not. I'm not going to let a woman come between a friend."

The call boy rapped at the door.

"I must go," she said softly.

He picked up his things, holding out a hand to her.

"Thank you for coming," she said. "Thank you for making me admire you. Now I know that you, too, have played an endlessly hard part. It is so tame to say, 'I am sorry,' when one's heart is bleeding. But I am sorry. Good-by."

"Good-by, Rosie Kumpf," he answered tenderly. "Good luck to you! I'll see you again, if you don't mind."

"I don't mind," she said gravely. "If talking helps, you must talk. It helped me once."

The raps came impatiently, and Rosie opened the door.

"Herr Krummacker looks upon you with distrust," she said, a faint smile creeping across her pink lips. "So you must go quickly. Good-by."

Stirling gave her a jaunty nod as he strolled nonchalantly away.

"Maybe I've been wrong to tell her," he thought as the doorman led the way out. "But she deserved some token that I understood. And Dan Royal deserves one of a different brand."

## CHAPTER VII.

The first relay of servants arriving at Melton Manor came into direct opposition with the second relay of servants residing at the manor the year round. The third relay, who accompanied Mrs. Montague and Edith, came on the scene in time to enjoy the fray and to take sides with opposing factions. The permanent servants had definite ideas as to which rooms the arriving servants should occupy, who should have the first table, who should be given the first serving. Added to the usual worries as to who would accept invitations and who would refuse, the customary endurance test with dressmakers and the commonplace arguments over the decorations, Mrs. Montague almost forgot a slight worry as to the baron's return as she threw herself into the preparations for her kermis.

Edith, strolling about the great lawns, singularly attractive now that it was



*Edith called out to him, but she could not hear his answer.*

free from curious guests, wondered if its builders, political English exiles of two generations back, would approve of the mad, merry, summer crowds that gathered to spend her heritage and indulge in idle pastimes of the rich.

Stirling, who had come out in obedience to Mrs. Montague's summons, found her in the old sun garden watching the peacocks strut up and down.

"Hello, fair maid of the manor!" he called out. "Don't start. It isn't graceful. You ought to have a missal and beads, and be looking devout."

The maid of the manor stretched out an athletic-looking, tanned arm to shake hands.

"I'm glad you've come. Auntie picked you out as the forerunner of the season. She has a dozen and one things to ask you; thinks it's ever so nice of your father and mother to summer in

Alaska and the coast. She can monopolize you beautifully. I'm sure she's going to have you standing on one leg in the drawing-room, trying the effect of the new staircase waltz; and she has a fear that the plunge isn't safe. You see what is before you."

Stirling dropped into the rustic seat beside her, fanning himself lazily with his Panama.

"Oh, I don't mind being champion tester," he assured her, "as long as you treat me kindly and feed me at proper intervals. I'm delighted at an excuse to shove business. Poor old Dan is still in the swim."

"Yes—I know."

There was a nervous, little inflection in her voice that made Stirling change the subject quickly.

"First of all, I'm waiting to be properly informed of two things.

One is the kermis, who's coming, what's doing, and whyfor. The other, your engagement to the baron. That is the advantage of old friends, Edith. They can look you straight in the eye and say things an ordinary speaking acquaintance could be lynched for."

She met his gaze without flinching.

"I knew I'd have to play press agent for myself. Well, then, the kermis is a new thing. It's been done a little at London garden parties. We are going to have all kind of wonderful attractions to entertain the mob. You shan't have all the surprise spoiled. There are eighty people coming to stay for the week-end. Count 'em—eighty. Can't you see poor, old Melton Manor overrun, and the shades of the departed owners hovering over the staircases in dire reproach?"

"Eighty—who in——"

"Every one of the 'washed' that auntie wants to show off the baron to. The kermis is really only another big, noisy romp, with too many things to eat; all new gowns and endless scandal parties in secluded corners. There never is any difference whether you call it a German kermis or an Australian boomerang party. The Mayo girls and a few more are going to have impossible booths to sell impossible things for their latest charity. When I come to consider it in cold blood, it's so absolutely foolish I'm ashamed to think I'm taking part. I can see the baron."

Stirling's face grew a shade redder.

"You think he won't approve?"

"Think? I know it. He's the most implacable, stoical, unfeeling person I ever——"

"Intended to marry," finished Stirling neatly. "However, that has its advantages. You mustn't be unfair. He won't create scenes in public."

Edith rose, and began picking at a near-by rosebush.

"You have never said seriously what you thought of—the marriage. That is, to me."

"You never asked me—seriously."

"I do now."

"Seriously?"

"Seriously."

Stirling crossed his legs, and fanned himself a trifle faster.

"Can't say," he remarked, after a pause. "It's your own affair, you know."

Perhaps it was the thorn in the rose she had just picked that brought angry tears into the deep-blue eyes. But the girl in the cool summer gown and bonnet turned on her newly arrived guest with indignation, and fled up the garden walk.

An hour later, the same young man, having sat in the garden looking with dull eyes at the half acre of roses, straggled to his feet and along the path, shooing the peacocks and nodding to the gardeners. The massive entrance to the old manor came in sight all too soon.

Inside the great hall he found confusion and turmoil. Maids ran to and fro carrying baskets of bric-a-brac,

Hodson was in a state of dejection over the keys to the wine cellars, and Mammy Lou, who had been Edith's nurse since the days of rattles and food plates, sat on the carved staircase to weep when told she must let Marie take care of her mistress' evening toilets.

Mrs. Montague, bland, pleased with the excitement she had managed to create, was in an upper morning room writing telegrams.

"My dear boy, just in time," she said as Stirling paused in the open door. "There is absolutely no head to anything here. Will you telephone in and see if Madame Enid has started the favors for Tuesday? They should have been here yesterday. Edith has simply left me alone, and rambled around the gardens. And the people begin to come to-morrow. I don't know what the porter has done to the front gates, they're impossible with squeaking. And if we bring out two limousines, we'll have to repair the stables. Sometimes I regret that Edith's father bought the barn of a place. It's a chore to think or plan how to keep it up. The chapel is in bad order. Would you ask Edith to go up and see about it? There ought to be flowers on the altar; and I've asked that thin young person named St. John to read service for us."

Stirling held up his hands in protest.

"Help! I'm swamped!" he pleaded.

"Wait till I try the first few on the list. Then I'll come back for more. I saw your secretary sitting on a back porch reading a novel."

Mrs. Montague reached for the bell rope excitedly, and Stirling took advantage of the opportunity to flee.

He discovered Edith comforting Mammy Lou.

"I came to take you upstairs to inspect the chapel," he said meekly. "Your aunt told me I might."

Edith rose stiffly.

"It's all been put in order," she answered. "I saw to it early in the morning. Never mind, Mammy Lou, a few old, fussy frocks aren't worth spilling tears over. Are they, Edward?"

"It ain't de frocks, honey," the old mammy sobbed. "It's de baron man dat



makes me get de misery feeling; when he comes back and you go 'way."

Stirling and Edith glanced at each other impulsively.

"I'll take you with me," she declared stoutly. "I'll take you with me always."

The chug-chug of a machine broke the trio. Five minutes later Dan Royal had bounced into their midst with an armful of news from the city, and a host of criticisms on what to do with the rose arbor and the kennels.

"When do your entertaining features arrive?" Dan asked curiously as he and Stirling played a game of Indian ball in the gymnasium for Edith's benefit.

"To-day some time, I believe. Don't exactly know. To tell the truth, I've such a loyal old feeling for the place that I hate to think of invasion by the usual set. It would be ideal to be here alone."

"Not with dining rooms like barns and drawing-rooms after the fashion of assembly halls. The old chap that built it must have been a young sultan in his own country."

"It is a wonderful place," she said musingly. "I have sometimes wondered if the castles abroad were like it. The old castles, not smart London houses and French apartments."

"No, I don't think they are," finished Dan abruptly. "Let's call off, Ed, and dress. It's late."

"The baron comes to-morrow," Edith volunteered.

"Splendid!"

"Immense!"

The feebleness of both exclamations brought an irrepressible smile to her lips. Then she bundled them off to their rooms.

Left alone, she wandered down to the winding, carved staircase which her father had brought from abroad just before his death. She looked below at the young army of servants busying themselves under the decorator's direction. She gazed into the long drawing-room, with its linen-covered furniture, its massive piano and harp, its priceless vases and paintings. All her own. And she would sell this, would forfeit the right to stay here for the sake of a

flimsy title, for the sake of a cold-blooded, ambitious man, who looked upon her as an immature, uninteresting young person, who had an annoying habit of being glad or sorry as the mood might strike her, and who lacked the control of her emotions necessary to take her place among his people.

She hit the carved stone staircase angrily with her small hand. The dull, red mark faded, and then grew bright again. A scarcely perceptible line of red trickled over the white stone. Still the motionless, apparently statuesque, figure might have been seen at the upper landing, looking with dim eyes at the scene below.

The decorator was busy tacking up the massive German flags at the head of the landing. There was an ominous meaning in it. Was it too late? Could she withdraw? What would it mean? A wild, erratic longing to rush to Dan and beg him to marry her came next in her thoughts. Then Stirling's face seemed to be looking into hers, with his laughing eyes and boyish, gentle mouth. She put her hands up to her eyes to shut out the vision. She must go away to think it out. Think it out again. And the baron was coming to-morrow.

"Please, I am on the wrong way up. The front door I should not have come in. But I lingered in the rose garden, and the others went ahead. So I lost myself. You will excuse?"

The two hands were dropped in amazement as the owner of Melton Manor looked down at a small, graceful girl dragging a heavy suit case beside her.

"Who—who are you?" she asked.

"Rosie Kumpf, of the Krummacher troupe. Do you not know about us? We have come ahead of time to rehearse for the kermis. For the baron." She paused significantly.

"Of course! How stupid. I didn't quite know who was coming. This is the way. Carl, show the young lady to the performers' rooms. Sorry you were lost. It is a huge place to come into as a stranger."

"Sorry that I was, also. A thousand

thanks. Good-by." The little figure seemed to dance away.

For a moment the question of her coming marriage was forgotten as she watched the small girl flit down the great carved steps.

"What a dainty, little creature. Rosie Kumpf! The name does not fit. Heigh-ho! Here's Dan Royal with all kinds of new white clothes on. I'm late. I hurt my hand, too."

But for once Dan did not grasp the injured member to caress it tenderly. Instead, he stared into space with a wild, excited look.

"Edith—who—who was the little girl with the suit case—the one following Carl?"

"She said her name was Rosie Kumpf. She was lost in the rose garden."

"But what—*what* is she doing here?"

Edith yawned.

"She's one of the famous acrobats that auntie corralled. She and her troupe are going to be featured at the kermis. All for the baron."

She waited to see if Dan would ask her about the tin soldier. Instead, he fell back two steps, clutching his hair in excitement.

"Dan, what's the matter? Does she remind you of your lost love?" The stinging, little bruise made Edith irritable.

"Rosie Kumpf—here! Ye gods!"

Dan raced down the steps in double-quick order. Edith called out to him, but she could not hear his answer. She thought he said: "Must tell Slats!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

They ate in the breakfast room that night, a scratch dinner at half past seven, during which Dan seemed eager to make an escape. He kept looking at Stirling with a mischievous gaze which made Edith wonder what his latest "drop" was.

"There has something happened, young men," she said as they went into the gardens. "Now 'fess up. This is our last informal time before the baron"—her voice quivered a little—

"and the mob rush in on us. What is it?"

"Honest, cross my heart," began Dan glibly; but Stirling cut in with:

"He's going loco, Edith. You've shown him altogether too much attention lately. I understand he rushed around after my man like mad this afternoon; was trying to find where I was. He was seen diving past the servants' quarters, using back staircases at a fast and furious rate. Hodson said he even invaded the back wing, and was heard thumping on doors."

"He was looking for Rosie Kumpf," exclaimed Edith suddenly.

Stirling gave a jump. Dan chuckled.

"Well, of all surprising things! What is there about the lady to cause young gentlemen——"

"What do you know about Rosie Kumpf?" demanded Stirling. "She isn't here?"

"Very much here. I found her toiling up the front stairway late this afternoon, looking like an elf whom some one had willfully dressed in modern clothes. She tilted her head on one side, and explained she was lost in the rose garden. That she was of the Krummacher acrobatic troupe whom auntie engaged to entertain our—friends. The rest of the troupe had followed the leader. But Rosie, true to her face, wandered into the gardens, and then invaded the front door. I sent her on her way. Dan appears a moment later looking like a liberated Monte Cristo, gasping out: 'Who was that girl?' He rolled his r's fearfully, Ed. When I told him, he bolted as if he had been exploded from an automatic cannon. All I heard him murmur was: 'Must tell Slats!' Here I find you with the same Rosie Kumpfitis. Now, then, who is *Rosie*?"

They exchanged side glances. Presently their hostess remarked:

"You know auntie is impatient if we leave her alone much longer. Hodson stands there with the iced things looking like a martyr. I don't like to insist, but who is——"

"Edith, this is so sudden," murmured Stirling.

"Nonsense! There's some reason for all this." She put a commanding hand on each broad shoulder. "You are not going to escape until I find out. Surely you won't force me to call down Rosie and ask the cause?"

"Heaven forbid!" Dan mopped his forehead nervously. "You see, it is this way: Rosie Kumpf met Ed—don't kick me, Slat. I thought the answer out before I began aloud—she met Ed when he was in Spain. She was there, too."

"Remarkable," murmured the inquisitor.

"He'll mess it if we let him go on," Stirling interrupted. "I'll tell it. A little, soft music, please. I met her when we were in Spain. Is that quite clear? And we had a flirtation. I suppose that is what you might call it. She is mighty unusual, Edith, out of place in the acrobatic work, and all that. And we both were lonesome. Then I went home, and was careless about writing. She thought I might be ill, or something, so she wrote to Dan, of whom I had babbled foolishly, and asked about my honorable health. Dan gave her a fatherly bit of advice about my character, and blew me sky high on the same mail. Just here, lady, I dropped out of the game. But, to my surprise and infinite sorrow, our young friend has corresponded with her regularly, sent her to Mrs. Hastings for any favors she might wish, and has seen her ever so many times since they played New York. I didn't quite count on the fact that she'd be at Melton Manor. That is a new twist."

"So"—Edith was trying not to laugh—"unconsciously I have introduced a novel personage in my home. One of Edward's past romances—"

"Edith, you mustn't talk about her that way," said Dan impulsively. "She's simply out of place in her work. You called her fairylike yourself, and you only spoke to her. If you ever came to know her—"

"Mrs. Montague wants to know, Miss Edith." Hodson coughed discreetly.

"Coming." The tall figure glided away. "I forgive you both—on condi-

tion you don't ask her to lead the cotillion."

Her laugh floated back to them with a ring of understanding comradeship.

"Now, then, Daniel!" Stirling faced his friend. "This is where you and I have a reckoning. Once before you commanded me to confess about Rosie. The tables are turned. Why have you made her love you, Dan?"

The sincerity in his voice surprised the other. He had dropped the careless, bantering humor that often irritated.

"Have I done that much?" asked Dan briefly.

"You have. You haven't a shadow of an excuse to stand on, either. Because you knew what a few light words spoken in jest did to the girl's sensitive mind. You came to her persistently in New York. You wrote her when she was away from the city. You saw her in Philadelphia. I saw her in Philadelphia, too. But I went to ask her pardon."

"And you think she cares?" Dan rolled a cigarette into tiny pieces.

"I know she cares. Rosie Kumpf cannot keep her real feelings screened. She has stayed in a shadow life too long to know that we brutal realities are accustomed to deceit, sham, hypocrisy concerning our emotions."

"Shadow life! You, too, admit the existence of such a thing?"

"Who doesn't? But don't hedge the subject. It is my business to talk with you. To say not to do likewise. If you can't marry—Edith, you mustn't go about bruising other people. I learned." He broke off abruptly. "You see I'm right, don't you? Don't stand there looking at me as if I were a rabid enemy. I'm damned sorry the troupe ever landed in this country. She's worth some man's making happy."

"Why shouldn't that man be myself?"

"You?"

"Myself."

"But—Edith?"

Dan took a step toward him.

"I don't love Edith except in one way. A boyish remembrance of a charming early romance. I love her as a friend—if such a thing can exist. I love her

with the loyalty of a disinterested man. That much I have learned from Rosie Kumpf."

"You mean to marry Rosie—marry a girl who—"

"Don't let me call you a snob, Stirling. Don't start that weak-minded clinging to conventional nothings. Edith is enough of a disappointment for one time. I mean to marry her—why not? Has sixteen years of music-hall life been her own choosing? Did you yourself believe that she was satisfied with it?"

"Yes; but one's wife—"

"Is the woman one loves. You talk like the tin soldier."

An angry pause followed. Then Stirling said:

"I'm wrong on it, perhaps. Only it seems to me you are moved by a quixotic notion. I can't become reconciled to the fact that Edith—"

"She's all I ever thought she was—and more." Dan spoke slowly, watching the white face opposite him. "Just because she has been overinfluenced by her aunt on this title question doesn't detract from her better self. It isn't that. I've changed, matured, crystallized. I've been an annoying sort of young thing, that bothered the life out of her with my shifting, quicksand love, which I nursed jealously. Meantime, I, too, lived along in a shadow world with a shadow heroine always consoling me. Every time Edith said no, my shadow girl said yes—and kissed me. Sounds womanish; but it's God's truth. Then through Rosie Kumpf I came to know the real shadow girl. The shadows deepened, and changed to actual lines. And I admit my mistake."

Stirling gave a queer, choked laugh.

"So all this time you've been—and I've made myself out the fool to her, the scatter-brain fool—and you—"

He turned abruptly and walked away. For the first time since they had quar-

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"Du liebe—" he heard the baron whisper.

reled as children, Dan did not try to follow.

He strolled in the opposite direction, past the lovely, dewy rose garden where he heard Edith singing some Italian lyric, while Stirling played for her on his guitar; past the practical, well-kept kitchen gardens where the servants congregated to speculate on the coming brilliance of the house party—down a side lane to the stables; back of them to the little artificial lake. On the green bank, unshaded, steep, he sat down.

A dozen weird ideas crossed his consciousness as he stretched out on the grass and listened to the night call of the birds.

"Streeng Be-an, you frightened me."

He started abruptly as he heard the familiar voice from behind. "I did not know who it was—I was lost again."

Another moment and he was holding Rosie Kumpf in his arms, for the first time kissing her tenderly, passionately, again and again.

"Shadow Girl, Shadow Girl," he murmured tenderly as she struggled in his arms. "You can't ever run away from me now."

"Please, please!" she begged. "Streng Be-an, you are forgetting. Only in our shadow world do we hint of such liberties. You must let me go!"

She wrenched herself free with a dexterous, little motion. Dan stood back, abashed, coming slowly to his senses.

"I—beg—your—pardon," he said slowly. "You must think I'm a cad."

Rosie Kumpf faced him defiantly. The moonlight showed her delicate features in their bewitching profile, and the white frock brought out the dead black of her curly hair.

"So!" she answered him, her hands clenched tightly together. "This—is the way we meet again."

"Forgive me," began Dan eagerly; but she stopped him with an uplifted hand.

She seemed to have grown suddenly tall and dignified as she answered coldly:

"You did not think to meet me here—is that it? You did not dream the Krummacher troupe whom you fed so generously would be engaged by your friends to entertain their titled guest. I could have told you the day the contracts were signed. But it seemed to me better to wait. I wanted to see how you would treat our shadow friendship when you saw me among the realities in your world of people. I have seen. Do you suppose," she added, with redoubled fury, "that I did not know you hunted for me all afternoon, that you left foolish messages with servants asking me to wait for you? And did you think I would obey them, like a housemaid meeting her lover behind doors? You did not think I followed you here to-night, did you? Like a guilty school-

girl, to sit on the lake bank and make love clandestinely! No, it was not for that I came. And because you happened to be here, was I to go away as if I were not of equal privilege? But you needn't have done—that." Her voice quivered.

Dan stepped forward.

"You must know why I did," he said tenderly.

"Because I am Rosie Kumpf, an acrobat," she answered bitterly. "Different from other girls. Cut off from your world as if I had a taint of black blood in me. But still Rosie Kumpf who turns somersaults in mid-air and kisses her hand to the gallery. That is why. Oh, you think I do not know my position toward you, shadow devotee that you may be. I am a second edition, limited, it is true, and you would be kind enough to say *de luxe*—but a second."

Her head drooped like a tired flower closing for the night, and there were tears in the dark eyes.

Dan took hold of her shoulders roughly.

"Don't!" he said sharply. "You can't let that stuff get by either one of us. You know I kissed you because my heart got the better of my head, and I forgot we were anything else but the unhampered shadow people we have played with so dangerously. I kissed you because I love you. Do you hear? Love you. I would love you if you played in music halls the rest of your life. But you won't, will you? You'll let me take care of you? You'll marry me soon, soon, won't you, Rosie Kumpf? I don't give a damn for your Krummacher troupe, or whether your name is Kumpf or Mary Ann. You didn't think I was that sort, did you? We've never had the time or place to tell the truth gradually. It had to come with a rush, and a jolt, and a turmoil of disturbing thoughts. I made up my mind I would tell you the first time I saw you. That was this afternoon when I watched you finding your way in the maze of corridors. That was why I left the messages for you, Rosie Kumpf. Now do you understand? I love you," he repeated, with an intensity

that made his voice seem old. "It's yourself, your own self that made me care."

"And the other one?"

"Don't play off like that." He tightened his grasp on her slender shoulders. "You understood before when I told you how the feeling was changing. You understood then, when I refrained from telling you where my love had wandered. Why can't you understand now, Rosie Kumpf, in the moonlight, in the setting for us shadow people? You don't mean that you don't care, that you can't love me, that——"

"Streng Be-an!" She looked into his eyes, smiling. "You are very, very foolish. And young. Younger than even Mr. Stirling. I admire your foolishness. But youth makes many things happen which age frowns upon. I cannot marry you. That is impossible. As impossible as if I were a hated princess, and begged you to marry me and you refused. We could not be happy. Oh, please don't interrupt. We could not stand the sunlight. Just now you are full of an impatient lover's thoughts, and you want to take me in your arms and kiss me—many times—saying foolish, impossible things that would cause us both to forget there must always be a calm, gray morning in which to act. No, I cannot marry you. I would not be so unfair to you. You have shown me a worthy side that I will always love. It has made me feel you are my own true friend, despite the—rouge and the society people who laugh at me. But——"

"You still think I want—her?"

"No, in that, too, I am sure you are sincere."

"And you mean this, Rosie Kumpf, that you are going on with the 'family,' on, and on, and—— Good God, you can't stand it! You weren't built for the life. You shan't stand it!"

"And why not?"

He dropped his hands in despair.

"There's no use playing the parrot, and repeating my little speech over and over. You heard?"

"I heard—and understood."

"And you refuse?"

"To even listen. I tell you I am doing you the favor. You'll look back to

now, and say: 'What made her so wise? Rosie Kumpf, the acrobat, who lived in a shadow world, had more sense for one moonlight half hour than I, Daniel Royal.' Believe me, it would not be happy."

"Do you suppose there is any one in the world, the real world, I mean, who is happy?"

Dan's lips quivered as he spoke.

"Sometimes I think not." Rosie's voice was smooth and even. She laid a gentle hand on his head. "There are two persons that might be happy if you would care to help."

"Who?" Dan prodded the ground with his toe.

"Miss Opdyke and Mr. Stirling."

"How?"

"Your friend, Mr. Stirling, is not the careless, irresponsible youth you think him. I think Miss Opdyke is serious, too, even if she contemplates marrying the baron. When Mr. Stirling came to me in Philadelphia, he told me the truth about himself. Because of your friendship, he has never told Miss Opdyke how he loves her. He has always stood in the background waiting for you to gain your favor first. If it is true you no longer love her—in that way—why not let him have a chance at happiness?"

"Rosie! Are you sure?" Dan's face came close to her own.

"As sure as I am that you love me, Streng Be-an. Now will you make them happy?"

She kissed him lightly on the lips, and fled away. Dan turned clumsily about, like a man playing blindman's buff, and held out his arms appealingly. But only the mocking caw of a bird answered. She had vanished, somehow, among the shrubbery.

## CHAPTER IX.

Stirling came unwillingly in answer to Dan's summons. Dan, who stood moping his forehead excitedly, began to pace up and down a side balcony.

"All I seem to do is to fall in love, fall out, fall in, hear about other people's falling in, and inform them of the fact. But I can't get ahead with my own game."



He smiled tenderly as he heard the echo of Rosie Kumpf's voice telling him she was sure he cared. He felt the soft, rose-leaf lips that had pressed his for a brief second.

"Did you want me, Dan?" Stirling stood nonchalantly against a white pillar. "I was going to play cribbage with Mrs. Montague and Edith."

"Why not hearts with Edith?"

Dan laughed as he spoke. Somehow he felt it was going to be a joyous sort of tangle.

Stirling did not answer. Dan proceeded daringly:

"There isn't any use in mincing matters. This is getting to be a pussy-in-the-corner affair. Ed, I've been a blind, selfish chap, and I'm sorry. I've made you many a bad half hour because of her—haven't I? Oh, I know. Rosie Kumpf just told me."

Stirling grasped his sleeve.

"She—told?" he muttered. "She dared to tell?"

"She dared to tell." Tender amusement showed in Dan's eyes. "She's done you the best turn of your life in telling, too. Because I don't love Edith as you do. But she loves you better than anything else in God's world."

Stirling staggered under the sudden truth.

"You're joking," he said hoarsely. "You're raw—"

"Go in there, and tell her you love her," commanded Dan. "Tell her you have loved her ever since she wore scratchy blue pinafores and thick pig-tails, that you were fond of dipping in mucilage pots. Tell her you've been the best friend a pal ever had, you've sat back and helped him try to win, when all the time it was written in the scroll that he would come to his senses some day and find out the truth; that his shadow world must end, and the shadow girl come to life. Edward, I'm not under the influence of any stimulant. Please don't take time to argue that out."

"Rosie Kumpf told me she wouldn't marry me; so, you see, your fatherly worry went for naught. I made as good a plea as I could, but she wouldn't listen. Then she said I might make some one

else happy instead of nursing a sore head. She told me about your confidence. You understand, Stirling, she gave me the chance to prove whether I still loved Edith or not. If I didn't, I'd be man enough to tell you the field was clear. And knowing how Edith cares for—"

"But does she care—are you sure? Why, it seems like—"

"I'd stake my life on it," Dan assured him grimly. "She cares so much that the returning tin soldier with his flimsy order can go back to Grosskopfsecke alone, enraged, and all New York can laugh at the outcome. That's how much she cares."

Stirling stood transfixed, benumbed. "Go on in," Dan said roughly. "Don't waste time. Get Mrs. Montague away. I'll get her away for you, and then bolt the truth."

Stirling started through the long, open window. Halfway through, he turned back.

"Dan, you're the best—"

"Don't waste ammunition on me," the other begged. "You'll have your hands full with Mrs. Montague, and her wrecked kermis, and the tin soldier."

"Leave 'em to me," Stirling answered as he disappeared from view.

How long Dan stood there he never knew. Lost in a reverie of incoherent fancies, he was conscious that some one shut the long French windows—Hodson, probably—that Press barked with joy; the sort of bark he gave when some one was going to take him on a personally conducted tour. Some one else coughed significantly—Mrs. Montague, he believed—and by and by he heard the gravel crunching, and he knew Stirling had taken Edith into the rose garden to come into long-deferred happiness.

Presently a black, moist nose shoved into Dan's palm. Looking down, he saw Press forlornly wagging his knot of a tail.

"We're not in on any of this, Press. I'm sitting out in the moonlight like a maniac. Edith and Stirling are making up for lost time in the rose garden. The tin soldier and Krummacher are doubtless comparing crawfish, or else have

discovered they were once side partners in a one-ring circus. And Rosie Kumpf is sleeping, dreaming of shadow land."

Press did not seem impressed by the explanation. He stalked back to the rose garden in hopes of rousing his mistress on to an old-time tramp. Dan walked languidly in the other direction. Sleep was impossible. He had a feverish, indescribable longing to walk and walk without end.

He had come close to the back of the main building. There was a soft night light burning on the big veranda. On the veranda stood Rosie Kumpf, her head resting on the Baron Grosskopf's shoulder. He raised her face between his hands and kissed her twice—on the lips. She laughed; the same throbbing, gurgling laugh that had made Dan's blood leap.

"*Du liebe*—" he heard the baron whisper.

Rosie Kumpf threw both arms about him impulsively, and buried her head in his chest.

It was midnight before Dan reached the third story of the manor. His room had always been next the old chapel, where he fancied the shades of former priests and their penitents might congregate. He walked slowly toward his room, tired, bewildered. That Rosie Kumpf should be the central figure in a common flirtation, whether it be with the baron or the porter at the gates, was beyond his conception. Yet he had seen with his own eyes, had heard her laugh of response, had—

The peculiar creaking of a door attracted his attention. Some one had entered the chapel through the rear. For a moment he hesitated; and then, with the thought that the night might still hold more surprise for him, he gently pushed back the green baize door in front.

The gold and silver altar service glistened in the moonlight; the old stained windows shed a holy light on the mosaic floors and the carved choir loft. The pews, rugged with age and pregnant with religious history, seemed to beckon him to come within. But he lingered only at the door, looking with

softened, forgiving eyes at a small, white figure kneeling before the old altar, her head bent in prayer, her hands clasped devoutly on the velvet-covered rail. He could see the straight, pink lips move as she prayed. One tiny foot peeped from beneath the hem of her robe.

Dan shut the door reverently and stole away.

"I don't care if a dozen tin soldiers kissed her," he informed his own image in the glass. "She's a shadow come to life. And I'll ask her again in the morning."

## CHAPTER X.

Edith would turn to Dan with happy eyes to say: "Oh, Danny, boy, it's too good to be true. Danny, how—how did we each of us ever keep the other from knowing?" Then she would look at a closed door within whose keeping lay Mrs. Montague, and the joy would be dimmed as she tried to murmur penitently: "It's such a shock for auntie. She almost fainted. And the baron arriving last night to make things worse. And no one to meet him. If he had held off until this morning, I would have wired him we were quarantined. You don't suppose he'll be nasty about it? I can't talk as if I had the slightest speck of regret."

"The baron be hanged!" Stirling said calmly. "He can go back to his Fatherland unhampered by the parvenu American wife. You see, I may as well start in being brutal."

Dan slipped away.

"It's only fair, though," was his parting shot, "that you take the baron aside, and tell him gently but firmly you are engaged to that old sweetheart of mine. That's due him, Edith."

Outside, he paced the broad veranda restlessly. Should he go to Herr Krummacher to ask formally for her hand? Perhaps the old man might bring influence to bear with her. Should he stop the tin soldier, and demand an explanation of the little scene he spied upon last night? Should he go to her, and tell her again how endless was his love? Dan turned a corner neatly. He saw a



*He wondered if she were a statue playing hallucination with his weary brain.*

car making for the south gate. Auto veils were waved frantically at him, and a chorus of noisy hellos were wafted across the gardens.

"Ye gods! A bunch has come out ahead of time." Dan chuckled. "Mrs. Montague will have to get on her war paint, and pretend she has discovered the baron to be bogus. Ed and Edith will have to call off their courtship and act royal. And the kermis with Rosie Kumpf in her spangles, comes to-morrow!"

hard. But if you were determined——" She paused significantly, but no reply. "We must face it the best we can. It's unfortunate the Carsons and the Trowbridges came before luncheon. Do I look as if I had been crying? Then I'll come downstairs, and we'll tell them the baron is sailing for England soon. Of course he will, as soon as he learns the truth. Think of his feelings, Edith! He so thoroughly expected it."

"He never said so," she protested.

"Foreigners never do. They have a

The baron stalked languidly across the veranda, the morning paper in his hand. His face was as implacable as ever. Dan felt the blood rush guiltily into his forehead as they exchanged greetings.

"Glad you're back," he forced himself to say. "You'll excuse me. There's a crowd of people just arrived, and Mrs. Montague hasn't been awfully well. See you a little later."

"Most surely," answered the baron, sitting down to read his paper composedly.

By degrees, Mrs. Montague, roused and dressed, wept, and changed to icy indifference, and at last listened to the combined pleas.

"I can never entirely forgive you, never," she declared. "It is a horrible, sickening disappointment, and I had worked very, very

quiet, reserved sort of affection that is more telling later on."

Stirling grinned.

"I never looked dangerous. Now, did I?"

Mrs. Montague tried to stare at him severely.

"You certainly acted diplomatically," she told him. "Have either of you thought what you are going to say to the baron?"

Stirling and Edith looked defiantly at Dan.

"I didn't suggest it," he begged.

"You really think I must?"

"You didn't expect me to tell him?" Dan remarked.

"No, you did your part long ago." The mischief crept back into Edith's eyes. "And we can't leave those people roaming at large. I'll go and tell him the truth."

The trio fled. Downstairs Stirling and Edith went to talk to the guests, trying to prepare them for the coming surprise. Dan strolled back to where he had left the baron with his paper. He tiptoed behind the military figure, so erect and motionless in the lazy wicker chair. Then he gave a low whistle, which the baron did not seem to hear. The newspaper he held in his hand was upside down, and the baron's eyes were looking fondly at the rows of inverted type. That had been the way Dan had left him twenty minutes ago. Barons, lately returned from Colorado on mining deals, are not prone to sit twenty minutes holding newspapers upside down, pretending to read. But last night he kissed Rosie Kumpf. Dan stalked away, his own eyes farseeing and distant.

Stirling managed to catch Edith in his arms a brief second as they parted under the main stairway.

"There's only a handful of decorator people about, so we needn't feel at all embarrassed. On my honor, dear, it's a terribly neat thing, this kermis. Gives the baron a glorious send-off to show there's no ill will, and us an excellent announcement test. They can't say a word. They'll probably laud you

as the ideal American girl who scorned foreign victims."

"We must thank—Rosie Kumpf," Edith whispered. "It's sort of like a fairy godmother."

Five minutes later she emerged, disheveled but still smiling, and looking severely at the retreating figure of a young man, who shamelessly kissed his hand to her.

She braced her shoulders, gave an appealing glance at the American flag above, and walked onto the broad porch. Still the straight figure of the baron occupied the wicker chair.

He rose as she came toward him, bowing gracefully.

"It is a pleasure," he began, a trifle confusedly; "this hospitality which you have showered me with. I feel as though I were trespassing—"

"He's going to!" Edith thought wildly, glancing about in hopes of Dan or Stirling.

"Not at all," she answered glibly. "We are indebted to you for your charming escort and attentions. Baron Grosskopf, will you understand if I speak frankly to you; very frankly?"

The blond head nodded graciously. Inside that blond head was but one terrifying thought. "She is going to ask my hand in matrimony!"

"We—auntie—every one." Edith found herself glancing behind once more. "I mean—well, there isn't any use in hedging, as Dan says. I am engaged to marry Edward Stirling. I promised last night."

She paused in embarrassment.

The most genial, fatherly smile possible illuminated the baron's face, the tiny, worry wrinkles fled away, and the blue eyes had a boyish look in them that was new to Edith.

"My dear young lady, I am delighted," he said heartily. "So glad am I for you. So good it is to see such marriages. The youth with the maiden. But is it not sudden?"

She looked at him in bewilderment.

"Yes—very."

The baron remained smiling at her, a flush in his usually white cheeks.

"You are to announce it at my kermis?" he laughed.

She nodded. Twisting her hands nervously, she managed to say:

"You—don't mind if—it won't hurt you—you didn't—"

"Mind? I? My dear Miss Edith, why should I?"

The baron drew himself up to his full height to gaze down on her paternally.

"Why, auntie, and every one else, and Dan, and Edward—"

A twinkle of amusement showed in the blue eyes.

"You thought I, too, came seeking fortunes across the sea? I, also, wanted to take a young American girl away with me to gloomy, old Grosskopfsecke, to bury her there the rest of her life while I spent her father's hard-earned dollars?—Your aunt thought so. That I knew. But you, with your clear blue eyes and your clever brain. Did you think so badly of me?"

Edith gasped.

"You never meant to marry me?"

The baron put up a protesting hand.

"Never in my wildest moments," he assured her. "Did I ever look so, speak so?"

Edith shook her head.

"It was all auntie and Lady Annesley Meade-Chaffee!" she admitted. "They did work hard over you. They told me it was the foreign way to be cold and unfeeling. To wait until you had seen actual evidences of my wealth—forgive me; but now that we understand, surely we may talk frankly. At first I hated you, then I tolerated you. I forced myself to become used to the idea of marriage. Dan hated you. So did Mr. Stirling. Dan said I would never be a baroness. And then—"

"The right man spoke at the right time. Is that it? And you felt you must come to me with your funny, little American freedom, and say: 'Listen. I am sorry I cannot marry you.' *Ach*, that is good! But you are very wrong. Once in a while there comes to America a nobleman who cares nothing for the American dollar, who looks at American girls who are so carefully displayed, and admires them as one admires the types

of any nation's women. That is all. You will make a splendid American housewife. You would have been a pathetic little baroness." He bowed gravely to her as he finished speaking.

She held out her hand.

"I'm glad you understand. But if you did not mean to marry me, please, why did you come to America? Why did you accept our hospitality, our attentions?" She paused awkwardly.

"I am not yet permitted to say. I came on personal affairs near my heart. And if I seemed to accept your attentions, it was because—"

"Auntie had you both coming and going. I know. I thought so myself at various times. If she tries to console you, don't be annoyed. Tell her just what you told me. And if the kermis bores you, just remember we are 'showing you a good time.'"

She vanished before he could answer.

The guests circled around the baron, as if he were a bird of rare plumage demanding close inspection. Tongues ran riot as to the possibilities there would be for house parties at Grosskopfsecke, whether Americans would be welcomed, and Edith was counted as the "luckiest thing in the débutante line." The baron, serene, almost genial toward the inrush of strangers, beamed on all alike, avoided Mrs. Montague with diplomacy, and was seen shaking hands with Stirling in man-to-man fashion.

Dan had left word with Mimi, of the Krummacher troupe, that he begged to see the baby of the "family" on urgent business. But no answer came from the left wing of the manor. Mrs. Montague, once reconciled to the outcome of affairs, rallied wonderfully, and began planning the trousseau.

"Nobody can deny that you might have married him," she told Edith after luncheon; "and we'll be counted among the unique who prefer our own country."

The guests came in a steady stream. Dan stayed mostly to the front, where he could relieve Stirling of embarrassing honors and take in the good points of the situation. But, when tea trays began to be carried about the lawns, he

slipped away until he found Herr Krummacher smoking a contented pipe on a side porch.

"Where are your charges?" Dan asked nonchalantly.

"To the woods they fled. *Ach*, this is soft work! I would not do it so again. Americans have too much money to spend. And to-morrow evening, for twenty minutes, we will entertain a handful who look any place but at us, and who applaud only because it is another kind of noise. I like work—real work."

"I shouldn't kick if I were you," said Dan, settling himself on the steps. "It can't be exactly hard lines to have a day or so lay-off and the regular money coming in."

Herr Krummacher looked at him indulgently.

"That is because the show is not in your blood," he answered. "You are not of our kind. Why are you not with the guests?"

"Because I want to ask about Rosie Kumpf." Once started, Dan felt a reckless boldness.

"And what about her?" The tone was guarded, restrained.

"I want to marry her."

The big, black pipe was knocked angrily against the railing. After a moment's hesitation, Herr Krummacher said sharply:

"You must not think of that a second time. It is impossible."

"Why?"

"I tell you it is impossible. Go to your American girls."

"There must be a reason," Dan mused. "Surely it isn't because you would miss her in your troupe. You know as well as I that the life will kill her by inches. She was never meant for that."

Again the pipe tapped against the wood with ominous forewarning.

"It is impossible," he repeated. "Impossible! To discuss it with you, I refuse."

Dan looked at him sharply. The memory of the kiss in the moonlight rankled in his memory. But the old

man's face was like a mask for all of its emotion.

"Thanks," he drawled, rising lazily. "Much obliged for the advice."

"You will not think of her again?" There was a note of veiled anxiety in his gruff voice.

"Not at all. I'm just getting views on the subject."

"I have seen your Rosie Kumpf," said Edith to Dan. It was two hours later, and every one had gone to dress while quiet replaced the strain of the tea fight. "We kissed each other, cried, and neither one knew just why."

Dan's face brightened as if by magic.

"You think she is all I said?"

"All, and more. I'm seeing everything rose-colored just now. People could ask me heartbreaking questions and I should laugh. I love every one—the baron next to you, and Ed, and Rosie Kumpf. I'm maudlin, Danny. Now you see what love means."

He did not answer. She reached forward in tender concern.

"Why, Dan, you're not—you don't—oh, Danny, don't let me know you still care for me!"

He smiled half-heartedly.

"I don't. That's square. I only care for her."

"Rosie Kumpf!" The same note of alarm sounded.

"Why not?" He asked it roughly.

"Danny, boy, you must not, you simply must not!" She clasped her hands in dismay.

Dan's lips set straight.

"Seems to me that of late all I've been is a sort of love statistician, going about saying: 'She cares for you. He cares for you. I care for you.' An inverted conjugation of the verb To Love, meaning to have a deep affection or attachment. And all that has happened has been the satisfactory ending of your misery and Stirling's, and the baron's peace of mind. I've made her unhappy by talking about it. As for myself—I suppose it doesn't matter. I've felt miserable so long that this isn't any novelty. Only I'd like to go to some one just once in my life, some one real, not a shadow, and tell them I love them, and have



them say they were glad. I don't care if she were a barrel jumper or a smuggler of Chinamen, I would love her. That isn't what you hedge at, is it?"

She shook her head wistfully.

"Danny, it is impossible."

Mrs. Montague, with a retinue of young people, swept down on them, and Dan drifted away, longing for a glimpse of the Shadow Girl. He tried to recall his shadow dreams; but they vanished like smoke on a frosty morning. He was no longer to bring the phantom pleasures before him. The spell was broken. Rosie Kumpf had stepped from her frame. His dim frontier of dreams had vanished. Only the long, straight road of reality lay before him, a road at the end of which stood Rosie Kumpf, unwilling, adorable.

## CHAPTER XI.

The kermis was over. The last of the correspondents for the society sheets had fled; the musicians, the decorators, the detectives had been bundled onto the late special train; the guests still gossiped freely about the engagement which had been announced at dinner, of the unmortgaged baron, who willfully persisted in returning so soon, of the gorgeous, Arabian Nights' entertainment, all for the engagement of a common plebeian, one Edward Franklin Stirling.

Old Hodson shook his head as he watched Dan go up the great front staircase—the last of the kermis participants to retire.

"He's been drinking," the man thought as he watched his drooping, slanting gait. "He's wise if he'll stay in his room until after lunch. He's been drinking. Him that I would have bet on against all the other young fools."

All that Hodson had said to him had been anything but important. Royal had asked if the Krummacher troupe were leaving the next morning.

"Oh, but they've gone on, Master Dan," he had answered. "They left as soon as their act was over. That was at eleven o'clock."

"Are you sure?" It was then that

Hodson noticed him swaying backward.

"Quite sure, sir. I saw them getting handed into the station wagon."

Then he had thanked him, and said good night. But Hodson could see that the stimulants were beginning to show.

So she had gone away as all shadows go, before one is barely conscious of their loss. She went without a good-by—on with the "family." They had all spoken truly when they said he must not think of her again. He began to whistle "Heidenroslein."

"Please!"

It was with a start that he looked up to see her standing in one of the niches in the wall. He wondered if she were a statue playing hallucination with his weary brain.

But she smiled, and held out her hand to him. He took it gently. The warm strength of it told him she had not gone with the "family," that she had waited to tell him good-by.

"You did not go? You are alone here? Do they know?" His voice was gentle and unconcerned.

She jumped down beside him. Her white frock made the color in her face seem like a delicately tinted cameo.

"I did not go with them," she answered. "There was something I wanted to say. They know I am here. It is quite right."

"And that is——" He waited patiently.

"We cannot talk here," she urged, looking toward an open balcony.

"We cannot talk very long. You must be tired."

He pushed the window open and helped her outside. The warm night air seemed cold, and he wished the moonlight would not shine so in her hair.

"The act went well," he volunteered. "You enjoyed it?"

"It went well," she agreed.

There was a pause.

"I should not like to hurry you," he finally said. "But it is late—early, to be exact—and it would be better for you to——"

She smiled.

"I will not keep you longer. I, too,

waited until all the house was still, and you were alone. I had thought to wait until morning. That would have been more sensible. But, somehow, I made myself speak to-night—myself would not let me wait."

She hesitated.

"Yes?"

Dan pulled at a stalk of wistaria, and tore its leaves rudely.

"The 'family' have gone on," she said, a little sadly. "I shall never be with them again. To-night I kissed them good-by for the last time—as Rosie Kumpf. You told me many, many times that I was not fitted for the work, that I could not be happy if my life remained the same. It has changed, Mr. Royal."

"Yes?" The memory of that moon-light kiss tortured his brain.

"Just so. I shall never have to climb upon trapezes again. I knew that to-night when I did my last act. I felt as a little girl does who plays with her dolls for the last time before she kisses them good-by, and they are packed away in an attic trunk. All the time that I was laughing, the tears were close to the surface. And the 'family' knew, too."

"I see."

The wistaria stem was crushed in his hand. Its juice stained the white waistcoat.

"I knew you would be glad." She waited for his approval.

"I am glad," he answered lifelessly.

She caught her breath, and the same gurgling, little laugh came from the white throat that Dan heard when the baron gathered her in his arms. He caught his own breath, turning his head away.

She came closer.

"I want to ask you something," she finished deliberately. "Once I asked you to prove you no longer loved her. Now I ask you to prove your love for me."

"Well?" The harshness of his tone made her draw back involuntarily.

"Will you marry me, Streeng Be-an?"

He dropped the crushed stem, his hands trembling.

"Are you fond of bad jokes?" he demanded.

Below came a man's whistle.

"*Verlassen, verlassen, verlassen bin ich.*" The whistle had a mournful sound. Forsaken, forsaken, forsaken am I.

"The baron," he said slowly.

Her face brightened.

"Will you marry me?" she repeated. "Ah, will you never understand or guess? Princesses are so embarrassed. Always do they have to ask for their lovers' hands. It has not been easy."

He darted toward her.

"Princesses! Rosie Kumpf, tell me what—"

"You said you would not marry a woman with a shred of nobility about her—but you will, oh, you will! You told me you hated aristocrats, that you would live in the Black Forest as a hermit before you would be the husband of a titled wife. But you will! See, it is simple. I am the Princess Dvorak. Like the storybook girls we used to laugh and cry over. I am the baron's niece, and he came all the way to this new land to find the soldier who had apprenticed me sixteen years ago. Is that not easily understood?"

Her dark head fell on his shoulder, and as she talked his hands, still unsteady, touched the firm, rounded curves of her slender arms.

"There was a bad quarrel—like the books tell about. And when his sister, my mother, would marry a young Polish officer, whose father had forfeited his title of prince because of political enemies, the family of Grosskopf closed their doors to her, and told her to cast her lot among exiles. When she died, and I was left alone, my father was shot in a duel. They sent word to Grosskopfsecke about me—like baggage uncalled for. And some one, some one who was very cruel gave me to a man to do with as he pleased. The Baron Grosskopf was old and childish, and his son Hermann was in Asia at the time. So the man sold me to Herr Krummacher, and disappeared. By and by the government restored the title. Too late, it seems, does it not? That is the way a government works. And when the truth came out after long, endless,

red-tape searching, I was missing, the only child.

"So, you see, all barons who come to America do not come for a rich wife. Deep in my heart was indignation the time we talked about it. I felt for my people. My uncle found Bentz, the soldier, in Colorado. He learned that I, his niece, the princess"—she dimpled mischievously—"was traveling with a band of acrobats. He cabled to Berlin. The vaudeville people cabled back we were in New York. He rushed to New York, and learned that his niece was to promote his pleasure at a kermis given by rich Americans, mount a trapeze, and do strange things for a princess. Ah, it is better than a book!"

"I saw you kiss him," Dan interrupted quietly. "He must have told you just then."

"That same night he came rushing here. He found Herr Krummacher, and made sure I was the right girl. When he told me, I begged him to keep it secret until it was over, and I could come to you and ask you—this. Miss Opdyke knew. I told her when she talked to me of her great happiness."

"I understand now," Dan's smile was a composite of bewilderment and ecstatic happiness.

"Well?" She arched her eyebrows, looking up at him. "Is there to be no answer? Will you keep me waiting much longer?"

"Rosie Kumpf—the Princess Dvorak! The Shadow Girl come into her sunrise! And did you never feel you were a princess, that some day some one would take you with them back where you belonged?"

"Sometimes—in our shadow land." Her soft cheek lay against his audaciously. "My estates are mortgaged and poorly run. They have lain idle a long time waiting for the government to restore the title to my father's eldest son. They did not know only a girl was waiting for it. Perhaps the government would have let it pass by had they known. They do not like girls. They cannot fight. You see, you will restore my estates." She laughed softly. "Just

as you had once fancied Miss Opdyke might restore my uncle's. Oh, he thought it a good joke. He will tell you about it some day. I am still poor; too poor to buy my coronet or court costume. But I am no longer Rosie Kumpf. A princess come fortune hunting—and you hate the least hint of blue blood. Poor Danny Royal!"

He would have stopped her lips with kisses, but she whispered:

"I have told Uncle Hermann I wanted to marry you. He is willing. He is waiting for us below—chaperon."

"Marry you—are you sure it would be wise?" Dan's voice was hungry with longing.

"Quite sure. As sure as when a rich New Yorker wanted a girl with the name of Kumpf to give up music halls and be his wife. I will not let my title be uncomfortable," she added quaintly. "You must let me go back to my people, to my estates. Just for a little while." Her eyes closed a moment. "I must see Grosskopfsecke, and my mother's grave, and hear the people tell stories about her. My uncle needs me for a little while. And then you must come for me, as the stories say, and take me away with you."

"You won't want to stay and marry one of your own kind?" he asked humbly.

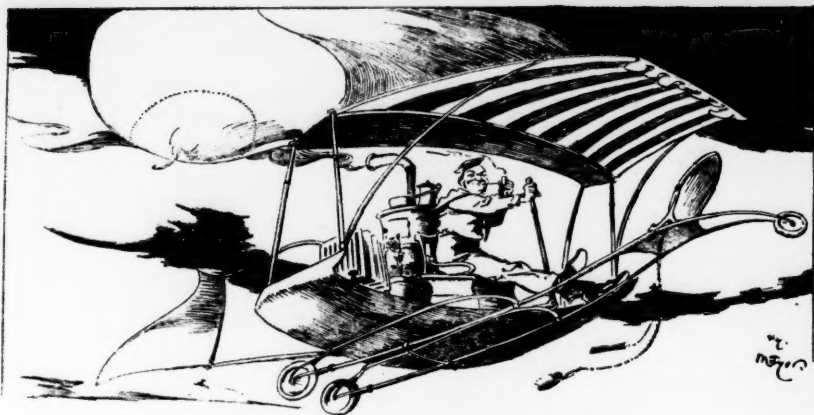
She shook her head.

"I was a princess for twenty years without knowing it," she told him reverently. "I can be your wife always without giving it a thought. God meant me to live for love instead of a coronet, don't you think so?"

He bent to kiss her hands; but she lifted his head and pressed her lips to his forehead.

"You have waited in the shadows a long, lonesome time," she murmured, "Streng Be-an."

The faint glimpse of dawn showed their figures daintily traced against the shrubbery. Below, in the rose garden, it showed the waiting figure of an older man, whose blue eyes were softened, and whose lips whistled love songs of his own country.



# Airy Nothings

By Wallace Irwin

ILLUSTRATED BY HY. MAYER

**L**UFF the bloomin' hawser,  
 Give a wild huzzah, sir,  
 Add to this a banzai and a rah-rah  
 For Captin' Cyrus Troller,  
 The fearless cloudland roller,  
 Who was skipper of the airship *Minnehaha*.

Now, Cy he loved a damsel  
 Whose name was Birdie Ramsell,  
 Whose father was a rich but grouchy feller,  
 Who'd stacked up quite an oodle  
 Of name, and fame, and boodle,  
 Inventin' of an aéroplane propeller.

Love spread its deadly virus,  
 So Birdie she loved Cyrus,  
 Which selfsame gent she magnetized with hope, sir.  
 "Oh, fill yer bag with gas, Cy,  
 Then come and claim yer lass, Cy,  
 For the birdman and his Birdie must elope, sir."

So Cyrus answered sober:  
 "Jest wait till next October;  
 The breeze will then be suitable for flyin'.  
 I'll git me old air banger  
 Assembled in 'er hangar,  
 Then off, me love, we'll speed to Father Ryan."

So Cy got out his airship,  
A delicate and rare ship,  
Equipped with engine, deck, and radiator;  
A mighty shed erected,  
By which she was protected;  
Then after seven months she was inflated.

October came at last, sir,  
Cy made his hatches fast, sir,  
And started on a trip to steal his darling.  
But sudden, so to speak, sir,  
The gas bag sprung a leak, sir,  
And down she came with frightful squeak and snarling.

It took eleven week, sir,  
To mend that gol-dinged leak, sir,  
And when again he tried the breezes rushing.  
Up came a cyclone whizzing,  
Which sent our hero sizzling,  
And wrecked him in a meadow south o' Flushing.

So Cyrus sent to Birdie  
This telegram quite wordy:  
"There's been a year's delay—please wait another.  
Science advances yearly;  
The air is conquered—nearly.  
Be patient, dear, and give my love to mother."

The climax of my story  
Is neither wild nor gory.  
Nine long years waited Birdie, melancholy;  
At last she met a hummer,  
J. Smith, a candy drummer,  
With whom she flew one summer night—by trolley.



# The Wooing of First Mate Dove

By **Holman F. Day**



ILLUSTRATED BY VICTOR PERARD

THE big steamer from Boston berthed at her river terminal fifteen minutes late that day. First Mate Willis Dove cursed soulfully under his breath while she splashed and foamed in the narrow channel of the river, making her turn before coming to the wharf of the fresh-water city. The dock men missed the heave lines, fumbled the hawsers, and everything went wrong. But at last all was secure, and Mate Dove tugged the whistle cord, and the big steamer grunted her sullen signal for gangplanks.

Then Mate Dove rushed toward his stateroom, dragging out his watch. He begrudged every one of those fifteen lost minutes.

He tore off his brass-buttoned coat, yanked off his collar and tie, and made ready to shave.

A young man, who exhaled the unmistakable aroma of a livery stable, tapped, and came in promptly with the air of one who was a regular visitor and accustomed to the premises.

"I've brought the hitch right down to the wharf. Late, ain't you?"

Mate Dove spat out lather and dropped a naughty word.

"They ought to pass a law to keep these jhammered old scows off'n this river. Late? Of course we're late. A blasted old bricktoter rammed herself into the dredged channel, fouled a buoy, and swung across our bows."

He began to rasp his razor down his tanned cheeks.

"There was one consolation in the holdup. I had a chance to lean over the rail and tell, at least, one old gunlow gorilla what I thought of him and scow captains in general. He had the infernal impudence to talk back. Allowed he'd been master of a deep-water vessel for thirty years. They're developing some good liars on this river—I'll have to admit that."

"What would you have said if it had been your girl's father?" quizzed the young fellow.

"I'll say this for Fritt—he knows better than to get underfoot. It wasn't Fritt. It was an old chap with a lam-brequin of whiskers under his chin."

"Carrying bricks, eh?"

"Yep!" returned Mate Dove curtly, for he was shaving his chin.

"Let me tell you who that was. He came to our stable a week or so ago and hired a team to carry him down to his brickyard. I drove the team. His name is Cap'n Aaron Sproul. That must have been your girl's father's scow, for Cap'n Sproul has hired it."

The youth chuckled.

Mate Dove whirled, razor poised, and looked somewhat alarmed.

"Are you sure he has hired it?"

"Positive. And Fritt must have been aboard. That's a good one on you."

"Well, I don't know as it makes much difference," stated the mate. "I can't be in any worse with Fritt than what I am. If he was below, listening, he heard a few opinions about gunlow men which may do him good. I suppose it's only human nature for steamboat men and gunlow men to hate each other on this river."

It was evident that the young man from the livery stable had been admitted to the confidence of Mate Dove in the past. He squinted shrewdly at



the mate, who was dousing water over his face.

"It's kind of funny you and a gunlow man's daughter should fall in love with each other."

"It ain't funny I should fall in love with Nina Fritt," declared Dove from behind his towel. "I don't care who her father is. I ain't going to marry him. But I'm going to marry that girl—I can tell you that, Jake. I ain't mealy-mouthed about it. I'm proud to know that she wants to marry me. You know what Fritt has been doing; he has been hiding her around with her aunts. Thought he could keep me away from her. Well, thank the Lord the aunts ain't gunlow men. As soon as I've been able to talk with 'em, I've shown 'em that I can make a good husband for a girl. One, two, three—I've captured the aunts. As fast as I've pulled one into camp he has moved Nina. Now he has got her with an old hornbeam-faced one that he thinks is safe."

Mate Dove had buttoned his clean collar, and was putting on the last touches of his "dolling up."

"Here's a go now for old sour face. If it hadn't been for that cussed scow I'd have been two miles on my way. I tell you, Jake, a steamboat man has to count his minutes ashore as though they were gold dollars."

"I reckon you've got it bad," stated the young man judicially. "After being up all night steering a steamboat, here you go, rampaging off in a livery team, to see a girl. You're a good deal romanticker than what I am."

"I'll swap eight hours' sleep any time for just one kiss with Nina," declared Mate Dove stoutly. "I've always talked this thing right out plain to you, Jake. A fellow who's as much in love as I am has to talk to somebody. I'd bust if I didn't. Between you and me, I ain't going to fool much longer with aunts. Nina ain't, either. I've tried to be square with Fritt in the matter. I've been to him twice. First time it was a boxing match; next time it was a riot. The trouble with him is, he's got this matter of steamboat men on the brain. After running a scow up and down this

river for thirty years, he sees steamboats in his nightmares; and they're all trying to crowd him ashore, and all the officers are lined along the rail spitting at him. He's got it bad. But that's no reason why he should keep two people apart when they love each other. Nor we ain't going to let him do it. Things will be happening pretty quick."

"I don't blame you," admitted the friendly youth. "Call on me for any help in my line. I only wish she had a sister one-half as pretty as she is. We'd make it a double wedding."

Mate Dove smiled indulgently, took a last look at himself in his little mirror, and dashed out of the stateroom.

Ten minutes later he was far on his way, the city behind him, a nervous little mare whisking along the light buggy at a rate which spun off the miles gayly. The air was balmy, the breezes sang at his ears, and love swelled his breast. He forgot that the night had been one of toil and vigil; the mental picture of Nina Fritt propped his eyes wide apart.

His way took him back down the winding river. The old scow was no longer in sight in the dredged channel. She had gone along. Mate Dove gave a snort of satisfaction. Admitting that his livery-stable friend was correct as to the identity of the gunlow, the fact that she had passed on down the river seemed to assure him a clear field that day, so far as the irreconcilable Fritt was concerned.

A bit farther on he turned away from the river. The keen scent of Cupid had promptly nosed out for him this latest retreat of his beloved. The nervous mare did not halt for hills. The impatience at the other end of the taut reins seemed to be communicated to her.

The first mate of a river steamer, who is obliged to make the most of the few hours of off duty between sailings, has not much time for cautious approach and lingering serenades. The comforting knowledge that Fritt was out of the way spurred him. He told himself that he was not afraid of aunts. He had conquered three—had won them wholly.

Therefore, when he came to a cozy

white cottage at the edge of a village he pulled up, and hitched his mare with all the assurance which might be displayed by the family doctor.

He slammed the gate behind him, picked a posy for his buttonhole as he walked up the garden path, and rapped smartly on the front door.

The door snapped open with a suddenness which fairly jumped Mate Dove.

"Well?" inquired the lady who had opened.

"Yes, I'm pretty fair," stated Mate

young man, and had determined to confine herself to that scornful monosyllable.

"I've told you I'm feeling quite well. How is Miss Fritt? I have come to call on her."

"You know very well that you can't call on Miss Fritt."

"Oh, I say! You're wrong. I'm right here now, calling."

"You may be right here, but you are not calling."

She leaned against the side of the door and put up her sturdy arm.



*In tramped Cap'n Peter Fritt. At his heels trudged Cap'n Aaron Sproul.*

Dove amiably. "Hope you are the same."

"Your cheek may stand you in good stead up at the other end of your run in Boston when you go flirtationing, but it's no good here," said the lady, who was tall, and whose outthrust chin signaled much determination.

"It may be cheek to come like a gentleman to a lady's front door and make a call," said Mate Dove. "I'm sorry you consider it that way. But I'd rather show cheek than be a sneak."

"Well?" It was evident that the custodian of the castle saw she was not gaining by arguing with this frank

Mate Dove, with much agility and paralyzing suddenness, dove forward under her arm, and came up in the hallway. He shouted:

"I say, Nina, I'm here! Where are you, sweetheart?"

The next instant a fine, plump young woman appeared from somewhere, and flung herself into his arms.

When the custodian strode to them, she found that they were so tightly locked in lovers' embrace that, when she shoved the intruder toward the door, the plump young woman was shoved along as well. When the aunt began to beat Mate Dove about the ears with the flat

of her hand, she discovered that she was bruising the fingers of her niece; for the devoted young woman clasped her hands about the mate's neck, and shielded him.

"There's just this much about it," cried Mate Dove. "Love will find a way, Aunt Lycena."

"Aunt Lycena!" she gasped. "Call me your Aunt Lycena? Why, you—you brass-faced young ape, if I wasn't afraid of hurting my niece, I'd take a chair and mash you flat. You have come it over three aunts who have got angleworms for backbones, but you can't wheedle me around. You may think I'm only a mere woman."

"I may be flattering you by thinking so," he returned, with spirit, his ears burning.

He walked backward into the sitting room of the cottage, drawing the girl with him. The outside door was too near the hall. In the sitting room his position was more secure. As a sailor, believing that a craft should be anchored when in port, he proceeded to make himself doubly secure. He sat down in a chair, pulled the plump girl upon his knees, put his arms around her, and surveyed the indignant aunt, his head close to the rosy cheeks of his "sheet anchor."

"Now I'm willing to talk this thing over in an aboveboard, open, and seamanlike fashion," he assured the aunt. "All you've ever heard about me you have got from Cap'n Fritt. Now, Cap'n Fritt ain't capable of judging a man when that man is officer on a steamboat. He has been soured by things which have happened on the river. It isn't right for him to let business interfere with love. Thank the good heavens my sweetheart, Nina, hasn't got any such foolish prejudices!"

He drew her face to his, and kissed her with a brazen effrontery that brought a yelp of wrath from the Cerberus who had been set to guard this treasure.

"He is all wrong about me, Cap'n Fritt is. He won't listen to reason. He has been to work and prejudiced you

against me, just like he did those other three aunts. Now——"

The tall woman had been pad-padding to and fro like a tiger getting ready to spring.

"Don't you start your wheedle business on me, sir. If you think you can go clear through this family fooling aunts, you have got another guess coming. You can sit there and talk till feathers grow on that oily tongue of yours. You can't budge me one mite. You got in here by a nasty trick. I can be just as nasty in getting you out. Nina, I order you to get up off that man's lap."

"I can't, Aunt Lycena," murmured the girl. "He is holding me too tight."

"Nina, I command you to get up this instant! Don't you lie to me. You can get up if you want to."

The color deepened in her cheeks. He had whispered to her.

"I say you can get up if you try."

"Perhaps I can, aunt. But I'm not going to try."

She checked her guardian's outburst with spirit.

"You may as well understand that Willis and I are going to get married. I am almost eighteen. I know the kind of man I want for a husband. My father is silly about the thing, and you are——"

"Hold right on! You be mighty careful how you ring me in, miss lady. You can't coax, entreat, or bulldoze me, either of you. When your father put you with me, he placed you where you'll be taken care of. I've given the two of you fair warning. In about two minutes I'll begin to act. And when Lycena Hubbard acts, it's time for timid folks to hunt shelter."

Feeling extremely comfortable in a snug anchorage, Mate Dove fell to wondering just what line of action Aunt Lycena proposed to pursue. He wanted to be ready for emergencies; and in that he displayed the instincts of a good sailorman who sees the glass falling. But before the aunt had indicated her program, or he had guessed, the custodian of Miss Fritt was relieved of responsibility. None of them had heard the

rattle of a wagon. The little drama in the parlor had absorbed all their attention.

The outside door was open.

In tramped Cap'n Peter Fritt. At his heels trudged Cap'n Aaron Sproul.

The tableau which presented itself to these gentlemen had elements of romance which did not appeal to Cap'n Fritt. His buxom daughter was seated on a young man's knees, and seemed to be perfectly at home there. The aunt, whom he had posted over her as a dragon to keep away this particular young man, appeared to be chaperoning the couple in amicable fashion.

"I've done all I could—I've been doing all I could!" shouted the aunt.

"So I should judge," remarked Cap'n Fritt, after a vain effort to curse as the situation demanded. "Only other thing I can think of you ain't doing is to set down to the organ there and sing love songs to 'em. My Gawd! Why is it I ain't got a relative who is true to me? I ain't got a daughter—I ain't got a daughter's aunt who can be trusted out of sight. I ain't got nobody to depend on in the whole wide world. All everybody does is set up nights and work Sundays, thinking out ways to fool and deceive me!"

He drove his fist into his palm, and then shook both fists above his head.

Then he twitched belligerently at his sleeves and strode across the room toward the lovers.

"Get up off'n that critter's lap! Get up, I tell you! I want to get at him!"

"I won't get up," declared the rebellious daughter.

"Ain't there any shame in you, you hussy?"

"Yes, I'm ashamed of *you*. And I won't get up, because I'm going to sit right here and protect my Willis."

This statement of the case did not appeal to Mate Dove's spirited nature. He resented Cap'n Fritt's truculent glare and his disdainful snort; and then Cap'n Fritt growled something about "a coward who was protected by a girl's petticoats."

Mate Dove immediately forgot that he was a suppliant lover and became a

steamboat man. This was not his charmer's father—it was one of the hated tribe of the river gunlows.

"Look here, Fritt. You'd better advise her to keep her sitting. She is protecting *you* as it stands now. You're safer when I'm anchored."

"I'll lend a hand here just as soon as you say the word, Cap'n Fritt," volunteered Cap'n Aaron Sproul, plainly anxious to start something. "That's no fit place for a girl."

"Who are you, and how do you happen to fit into this strictly family matter?" asked Mate Dove wrathfully. "It appears to me you have got into my way once to-day—with a scowload of bricks. I'm advising you to keep out of the way from now on."

Cap'n Sproul elbowed the sputtering father back. He grasped avidly at this opportunity to become a principal. The fact that he had never seen Mate Dove until their meeting on the river that morning did not moderate his zest for prompt combat.

He knew in his own heart that it really mattered little to him whether Mate Dove won this girl or not. But here at last he had come face to face with the sardonic and abusive young man who had insulted him in the presence of a hundred grinning passengers that morning. The young man had had a position of distinct advantage. He had been posted on a great steamer's lofty bow, and Cap'n Sproul had been far below at the tiller of an humble scow. Now they were on an equal footing. The young man no longer wore his gold-laced cap and his brass buttons. And, furthermore, he was a trespasser.

"I'll show you where I fit in. This is Cap'n Peter Fritt, and he's my close friend."

Cap'n Fritt blinked at that statement. His short and tempestuous acquaintanceship with Cap'n Sproul had been distinguished by the amount of disdain the latter had lavished on him.

"You stood up there like a gull on a spar buoy" this morning, and called me all the names you could lay your tongue to—and I was master of a deep-water craft before you knew A from B in your



*The girl waved the white mystery at him.*

primer lesson. I'm Cap'n Aaron Sproul, late of the *Jefferson P. Benn*; that's who I am. I was thrashing off Cape Horn when you were begging for coppers to buy sugar teats with."

"Say, see here. If that history of yours has been printed in a book, send me a copy of it. I don't see where the yarn fits in here. If you couldn't sail your old *Benn* better than you handled that gunlow, I can see the reason why you call yourself 'late.' You're too late to catch up."

Mate Dove kept his arms about the blushing girl, and had assumed a very gallant air of bravado.

Having had the main proposition so

head!"

Mate Dove started to offer vigorous resistance; but the aunt dragged the finger nails of her other hand across his cheek. The girl screamed with pain, and followed the pull of those bony fingers. There was no resisting that strain—and the ear was tender.

"Now, if you two live men don't know what to do," shrieked Aunt Lycena, who had removed Dove's main bulwark, "I'll do it myself after I've tied this girl up."

The two old captains needed no suggestions. They leaped upon Mate Dove, took him between them, and rushed him out of the house on the gallop.

summarily taken off his hands, Cap'n Fritt turned upon the aunt.

"I have always stood up before the whole family and said you was a corn-cracker," he complained. "I have always said that nobody could come it over you. My guardian angel must have whispered to me that you ain't what you have pretended to be. Something told Cap'n Sproul and me to anchor the scow and rush over here across country. We sacrificed business interests to do it. And what do we find? We find you helping and condoning. We find you managing a kissing bee."

Aunt Lycena's face was gray with passion. Her eyes blazed with resentment at this unjust accusation.

"You do, hey? I can stand about so much of one thing, and then I act."

She leaped toward the couple. She clenched the girl's pink ear between her bony fingers.

"Come up off that lap," she snarled, "or I'll rip that ear right off'n your

He was young, and lithe, and indignant; but they were stocky and determined.

On the way down the path to the gate Cap'n Sproul managed to get in a kick; and after that act of contumely satisfaction flooded his soul. A man had insulted him that morning; before night-fall he had kicked that man heartily. He did not pause then to consider whether the account between them was square or not; but he owned up to himself that he felt much better.

"Up with him!" he shouted when they came to Mate Dove's carriage.

They lifted the young man between them, and tossed him upon the seat.

"You're on your own deck now," stated Cap'n Sproul. "If you stay there and get under way, you'll save yourself a lot of mussing up. You ain't in bad shape now outside of them scratches on your face. But if you get out of that carriage again some of your rigging will go by the board."

Mate Dove had exhibited contumacious signs of proposing to get out.

"Cast him off, Fritt!" commanded the cap'n.

The father untied the halter and threw it into the carriage.

"If there was any sense in licking the two of you, I'd get out and do it," declared the mate. "There isn't, though. But I want to serve notice on you, Peter Fritt, that I'm going to marry your daughter because we love each other—and I'm a square, decent, hard-working man who can make a good home for her. After what has happened here to-day, I don't show any more consideration for you. It's going to be man to man between us; and I'll bet you a thousand that I get her."

He drove away.

"You've got to admit he's more or less gritty, considering he's a steamboat man," said Cap'n Sproul, with grudging admiration.

"I'm up a tree. I don't know what in thunder I'm going to do with her," lamented the father.

"There ain't another aunt, is there, who is two-thirds bulldog and one-third Bengal tiger?"

"This is the only aunt left. He wheedled all the others. And I ain't got no more confidence in this one. That fellow means business."

Cap'n Sproul, after he had regarded the toe of his boot with complacency, pulled out his watch.

"This isn't going to do for us, Fritt. The tide is due to serve us. We've got to get back to that scow. I'm in for a forfeit if them bricks ain't delivered by to-morrow."

"You're thinking more of bricks than you are of my girl," Fritt complained.

Cap'n Sproul admitted that to himself. Yes, thinking it over, he concluded that he had squared matters with Dove in fairly comfortable shape.

"I ain't in any frame of mind to 'tend to business, Cap'n Sproul. That mate is up on his bean water. He'll steal my girl just as sure as a hornpout can't fiddle."

"There's this you can do, Fritt. If she lived with you on your gunlow once, then she can live there again for a while. It's cozy and safe. Let her pack her valise and come along. This brick business has got to be looked after."

"It's the only safe way," said Cap'n Fritt, after pondering. "I can't trust aunts any more."

Miss Nina listened to the edict in haughty silence. The aunt heard it in offended dignity, conscious of her efforts and resenting Fritt's judgment of her.

The girl did not resist. She packed her little bag and rode away with them.

That night the old *Ripple*, borne by the tide and the current, dropped down-river, Cap'n Fritt at the wheel. The daughter shut herself up in her stateroom. The night was warm, and Cap'n Sproul sat on the deck with his back against the cabin, and dozed and smoked his pipe.

The *Ripple* arrived at her destination betimes next morning, and the bricks were discharged by a nimble gang of the contractor's men. A stiff sou'wester in the afternoon sent the gunlow bowling back upriver.

The big steamer alternated with another of her ilk on the Boston run.





"For shame!" echoed another of the trio.

The *Ripple* was back at her wharf at the brickyard when Mate Dove's craft came up on her next trip. Cap'n Fritt heard her gruff whistle ere she appeared around the bend in the river. His daughter was seated on the roof of the cabin, shaded by a strip of canvas.

"You go down below out of sight," commanded Cap'n Fritt, hurrying aft from his labors on a fresh cargo of bricks.

She shook out the white mystery with which her needle was busy, set her teeth, and shook her head.

"I mean what I say," he shouted.

"I refuse to play jack-in-the-box to satisfy a whim of yours," she returned.

"If it wasn't for the waving, and lallygagging, and flirtationing which went on before I sent you ashore off'n this river, you wouldn't be causing me all the trouble you've caused on account of that steamboat dude," he raved. "Now I propose to be obeyed."

"I'm obeying you, sir. I have come back aboard this scow because you have ordered me to do so. This is a pretty life for a girl to be leading when her father has twenty thousand dollars in the bank! But I am here because you have ordered it. However, there is a

limit. I have reached it. I will not dodge, and duck, and hide myself every few minutes like a child or a criminal. I am doing nothing wrong in sitting here. I am minding my own business. I will not go below."

"I'll make you do it, then!" He advanced in fury. "I'll pick you up and lug you down."

"I'll remind you, father, that I weigh one hundred and fifty pounds. And from the first moment you put your hands on me I shall scream blue murder. I wonder what the brickyard men will say to you when they hear me."

He halted beside her, closing and unclosing his hands.

He cast uneasy glances at the laborers. It might be hard to explain this scene aboard the scow if she kept her word—and he knew the spirit of his daughter by this time.

The big steamer was in sight, sweeping up the river, a towering palace of white, her brass work scintillating.

"If you attempt such a shameful performance," she warned, "I shall scream and demand protection."

He did not dare to provoke the demonstration. He stamped about the deck, cursing all womankind.

Love guided the eyes of First Mate Dove. When the steamer was abreast, he dashed out of the pilot house, leaned over the rail at a precarious angle, and swung his cap wildly. The girl waved the white mystery at him with one hand, and flung kisses with the other.

"I wish this deck would open and let me right down through, and then snap shut over me so that I'd never see the light of day again, nor any such things as I'm seeing now," mourned Cap'n Fritt, taking another tack after he had found that fury availed him not. "There ain't love or respect or obedience in my own family. I have tugged-lugged and saved all my whole life. This is all the thanks I get."

Cheeks rosy, eyes alight, red lips parted, Miss Nina waved her last salute as the steamer swept past. She sat down again under her strip of canvas.

"The trouble in this matter is all with you, father," she stated, with severity. "Because you have always quarreled with the steamboat men on this river, you insist on lumping my own affairs in with yours. I know that Mr. Dove is an honest young man. And I love him."

"I hate him."

"He hasn't asked you to marry him, father. That's my own business. I am willing to obey you in reasonable things. But I believe a girl in this country has the right to pick out her own husband."

"You and me differs," he declared obstinately. "I don't want any more argument. It ain't going to be said up and down this river that I let my girl and a steamboat dude back me down. You ain't going to marry him."

He went back to his cargo, and she bent over the white mystery.

When Cap'n Sproul came down from the brickyard to inspect the progress of loading, he proceeded emphatically to stiffen Cap'n Fritt's resolution.

"There's two of us, and two of them, Fritt," he said. "And if you and me ain't more than a match for a girl and that steamboat critter, I'll make a hearty meal off'n bricks and peppersass. We've got your girl where we can keep

a sharp eye on her. So let your mind rest easy."

That afternoon Miss Nina had callers.

They were three elderly ladies who arrived in a surrey. The young man who drove hailed Cap'n Sproul jovially when the surrey passed down the brickyard lane to the wharf. It was the same young man who had been the cap'n's charioteer on a previous occasion—the young man with the livery-stable aroma. Fritt, who was with Cap'n Sproul in the brickyard, yapped an oath, and started after the surrey.

"It's them three aunts that he managed to wheedle," he explained. "It's all plain to me. He has wheedled 'em some more, and has sent 'em down here to spy and concoct."

Cap'n Sproul decided to follow the surrey, too, and arrived at the wharf with Fritt just as the ladies were going aboard the gunlow. Miss Nina was welcoming them joyously.

"I'm a frank and open man," shouted the apprehensive father. "You three women haven't used me right. You sold out on me. You're backing my girl in her cussedness. I order you to climb off'n this gunlow and go on about your business."

"This is my home as long as you oblige me to stay here," cried Miss Nina. "I love my dear aunts, and I ask them to remain."

"For shame, Peter Fritt!" remarked one of the ladies. "You are not a Turkey chief, are you, shutting up women?"

"For shame!" echoed another of the trio. She wore widow's weeds, and pushed aside her heavy veil to stare at him with severity.

"I'll bet ye a thousand dollars to one of them bricks there that this surrey is paid for by that grinning hyena of a steamboat mate. You are down here in a bunch to canoodle around and play a plot onto me."

"Has it got to a point where respectable women, coming to cheer up the solitude of a dear niece, must be insulted by a father who has turned into a tyrant all at once?" inquired one of the aunts.

"I never stand by on one foot and

keep still when a friend of mine ain't getting the square show he is entitled to," stated Cap'n Sproul, with decision, feeling entitled to officiate in family councils in regard to Fritt's daughter by this time. "I have been brought into contact with this Dove, and I know that he——"

"But we don't know you, sir. We have not the least desire to know you. Who is this presuming person, Nina?"

"He seems to be a meddling old brick-yard boss who has hired papa and his scow, and thinks he has bought the right to run the whole Fritt family," replied the girl, pouting indignantly. "He was very rude to Willis out at Aunt Lycena's house."

"If this has got to be me and Fritt against the field, then we're ready for the wrastle," stated the unabashed cap'n. "We have been a match for two—we are just as much of a match for five—and if there are any more aunts and a few uncles, bring 'em on. When a persecuted father asks me as a friend to grab a-holt and help him, I don't consider that I'm butting in. So your sneers roll off'n me."

The girl sniffed contemptuously.

"Come below, aunts. It's by no means pleasant to stand here and be insulted."

"Now how do you figger this new rinktum?" asked Gunlow Peter solicitously, when he had retired up the wharf with the furious cap'n.

"I don't bother to figger. They ain't worth it. They're only three old setting hens who have come down here to cluck around a spell. Three old Plymouth Rocks—and a Tufted Houdan," he added, in slighting reference to the widow's weeds.

When supper was announced, Gunlow Peter took his plate full of food and went forward, thus registering his sullen protest against the presence of the guests.

Soon after the dusk descended, he saw the three aunts file off the scow toward the surrey. He was sitting forward, smoking his pipe and waiting for them to leave.

"I hope your conscience is out there

with you, reproaching you," called one of the aunts.

Cap'n Fritt walked aft.

"Glad to see that you're leaving," he said, with mock affability. "Hope you'll come again—when there's skating in Tophet."

"We'll leave it to you to advise us when that is—you must have inside information," retorted the aunt, with alacrity.

"I don't suppose shame is in you, Peter Fritt," said another. "If there was, you'd have more pity for your poor daughter. She has been crying her eyes out. We have put her to bed in her room, poor thing! If you've got the least bit of consideration, you'll tread softly around here to-night. Her head is splitting."

The surrey drove off.

After he had knocked his pipe dottle out against the rail, Cap'n Fritt went below and turned in, making his way about the cabin as carefully as he could. He had awaited the going of the aunts with impatience, for the *Ripple* was again loaded, and was scheduled to drop downriver early the next morning.

Cap'n Sproul was aboard at peep of day.

"I'm perfectly capable of running my own scow," stated Cap'n Fritt, a bit ungraciously. He remembered how Cap'n Sproul had usurped authority on the preceding voyage.

"Look here, Fritt, let's not start what bids fair to be a pleasant trip by having an argument. You are thinking more of girls, and first mates, and aunts than you are of getting these bricks down to where they're due. You need help, and until you get your affairs straightened out you're going to get said help from me. I've got money tied up in this brick business, and I propose to get it out. So cast off your lines, and let's be getting the advantage of this tide.

"How did your daughter survive the aunt bee?" asked Cap'n Sproul when the scow was under way.

"She went to bed with a sick headache," grunted Cap'n Fritt. "I'd be bedrid myself if I had to set and talk three hours with them sappags. You

take women who are soft enough to let a steamboat man wheedle 'em, and there ain't much sense in 'em."

"Oh, well, she'll probably revive enough to come on deck by the time that Boston boat overtakes us on her way downriver to-day," suggested Cap'n Sproul maliciously. "We'll have some more of that flirting."

"I reckon I'll close the hatch on her," said Cap'n Fritt. "I'm on the high sea now, as you might say. I'm master aboard my own craft."

Having it in his heart to keep his daughter below, where the sight of her could not delight the heart of First Mate Dove, he forbore to disturb her even to inquire how she felt. He was at the wheel. Cap'n Sproul did not exhibit the meddlesome spirit he had shown on the first trip.

The forenoon was well along when, far behind them, signaling a river landing, they heard the hoarse hoot of the big steamer on her way down the stream.

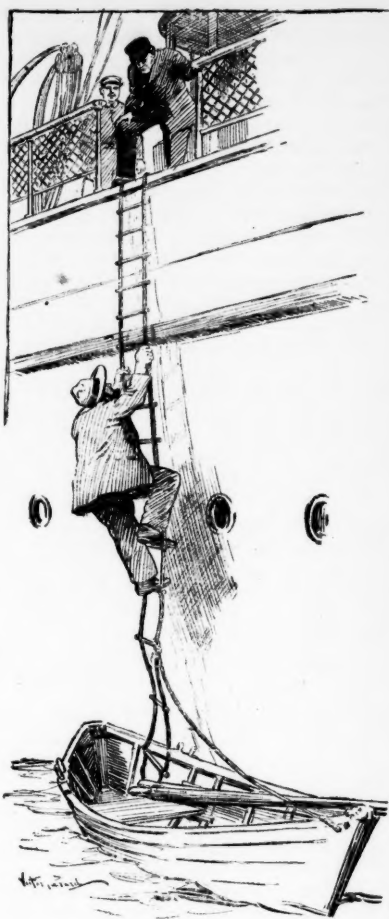
Cap'n Fritt, from his post at the *Ripple's* wheel, could see the door of his daughter's stateroom. He had been keeping his eyes on it. It opened. He leaped to the hatch to slam it shut—and then he did not slam it. For the one who issued from the stateroom was not the buxom Nina. It was one of the aunts—it was the aunt who had worn the widow's weeds. She was divested of that adornment now. It was plain to Fritt what had happened. Miss Nina had walked away, shielded by that heavy veil.

The aunt came up the steep steps. She was smiling.

"That was the steamer's whistle, wasn't it, Peter? I want to be up where I can wave to 'em when they go past."

Cap'n Fritt did not explode. He was too dizzy—too befuddled. And he felt as though the breath had been knocked out of him.

"Now that they are on the steamer, safely on their way, you may as well know all about it, Peter," she said blandly. "I believe in being open with a father when you can be open. Nina is on the steamer. Her two aunts are



Two minutes later Cap'n Sproul was clambering up a ladder.

with her. They are to go along to Boston as chaperons, and bridesmaids, and so forth. For Mate Dove has taken out the license all proper, and they'll be married as soon as they land—and I'm sure they will live happy ever after."

Gunlow Peter pulled off his coat and flailed it down upon the grimy deck. He yanked off his hat, and whacked it down on the coat. Then he jumped up and

down on his discarded wardrobe, howling in the lugubrious key in which a hound pitches his lament. Far behind, the surly snarl of the steamer's whistle mocked him.

"Remember that there's a lady present," warned the aunt when Cap'n Fritt began to express some of the more riotous of his feelings. "You're Nina's father—we aunts admit that, of course. And because you are her father, that's all the more reason why you ought to make her happy. We have looked up Mate Dove's life—we have studied his character. Women know how to do that. He will make her a good husband. It's full time you had some of the foolish notions knocked out of you, Peter Fritt. You might just as well reconcile yourself."

"What right have you got to be interfering in a man's family affairs?" demanded Cap'n Aaron Sproul.

"Just as much right as you have—and then a great deal more," returned the aunt.

"You reckon you have done all the interfering that's necessary, don't you?" asked the cap'n.

He had taken the wheel of the *Ripple*, for Fritt seemed to be wholly absorbed in other matters.

"No more interference is needed—the thing is all settled, sir. You keep your eye out, and you'll see a very happy party go past here shortly."

"They will go past, hey?"

Just below them were the buoys which marked the narrow, dredged channel.

"Make ready that anchor for'rard," bellowed Cap'n Sproul, shaking his fist at the grimy foremast hand. "Now, Fritt, stop that howling and hopping, and stand by for orders. Stow your kedge anchor in that rowboat astern. Step lively! If you don't want that brass-buttoned catfish to steal your girl, get onto your job as I tell you."

He glanced over his shoulder. Moving stately and slow, the lofty bulk of the Boston steamer was emerging from behind the trees of the upper bend. The *Ripple* soon reached the head of the narrow channel.

"Down killick!" roared the cap'n, ad-

dressing the astonished foremast hand. He rapped the pin and the anchor splashed. "Into that boat, Fritt. Row over there, and let go that kedge."

Fritt obeyed. His duller comprehension had grasped some of Cap'n Sproul's plan, though how a scow which was anchored broadside across a channel could hold up a big steamer, except momentarily, he did not understand. Cap'n Sproul paid out the hawser of the kedge as Fritt rowed away and made fast the rope around the bitts when the kedge was let go. The *Ripple* swung around with the current, and bulked her ungainly broadside across the dredged channel.

The moment Fritt was back alongside in the rowboat, Cap'n Sproul leaped into it, and ordered Fritt out.

"What is done here has got to be done mighty spty," he shouted. "I've seen a gun down in your cabin. You load it, Fritt. Remember you are aboard your own vessel. If they try to send men aboard here stand 'em off. No, they won't ram you, either. Even a steamboat man will think twice before he sinks a scowload of bricks in a dredged channel in front of himself. They wouldn't get out of this river for a week."

He banged his oars between the tholepins, and began to row upriver toward the oncoming steamer with a vigor a college stroke would have envied.

"Hoot away, blast your old tin lungs!" growled Cap'n Sproul, not turning his head at the whistle's clamor. "You can't toot either me or that gunload off'n this river."

The spectacle of the blockading scow and the man who was rowing frantically had produced the effect the cap'n desired. He heard the big steamer churning herself to a standstill. He rowed alongside, his little boat bobbing on the waves from the mighty paddles.

A voice like a foghorn was hurling perfectly horrible imprecations down at him. He looked up to meet the furious gaze of a burly man who was leaning over the starboard rail. The gold lace on the waving arm indicated that this was the captain of the steamer. In this

crisis he was not delegating the duty of objugation to understrappers.

"I ain't here for a swearing match," bellogged Cap'n Sproul.

He put his palm to his forehead and peered up. He believed he recognized this burly man. Yes, he did recognize him. It was one Jim Katon, who had been second mate of the *Jefferson P. Benn* in the old, old days when Cap'n Sproul had commanded that noble wind-jammer.

"There's no need of my starting in swearing, Jim. You know I can out-swear ye. Sling over a ladder. I've got five minutes' business with you."

The burly man was clearly astonished. Furthermore, he was impressed. When an old commander appears under one's bows and barks imperatively, the first impulse is to obey. Two minutes later Cap'n Sproul was clambering up the ladder, having hitched his skiff to the foot of it.

"You and me knows just how valuable time is for seafaring men," declared Cap'n Sproul, the moment his feet were on deck. "My speech will be short and to the point. Your first mate is stealing a girl. There's her true and lawful father down there in that scow." Then he lied magnificently. "As captain of this steamer you pass her over now and here, or I'll wave a signal, and that signal will mean that Fritt—who's the father—will touch off enough dynamite aboard that scow to blow her bottom out. And you'll be bottled up in this river long enough for your passengers to hire out ashore for the strawberry season. So hand her over."

The passengers had rushed forward to learn the meaning of this single-handed holdup. Through the press came breasting First Mate Dove. Behind him was Fritt's girl, and her two aunts convoyed her. Mate Dove dragged a paper from his pocket, unfolded it, and stuck it under Cap'n Sproul's nose.

"Can you see that writing past that old proboscis of yours that is most always stuck into other folks' business?" he demanded. "It's clearance papers issued all regular by Cupid's custom-

house. It's our marriage certificate. I wasn't taking any chances. We're on our wedding trip. And you go back and tell Father Fritt that when he comes to he'll find he's got a good son-in-law."

Cap'n Sproul blinked a while at the paper, saw that it was real and regular, and then turned his gaze on the burly man who had suddenly become genial.

"I stood up with 'em just before we sailed," stated Captain Katon. "I'm sorry Fritt was so foolish about the thing. He'd have had a chance to give away the prettiest girl on the river. It's all over, Cap'n Sproul."

He slipped his hand in Cap'n Sproul's arm and drew him away.

"For the sake of old times, I won't say anything to the department about your performance to-day. You realize, of course, you'd be in bad if I was to yip. But let it rest between us, as old shipmates."

"It was done on the spur of the moment," faltered Cap'n Sproul, the enormity of his transgression of the law coming to him in full force now that he reflected. "I didn't have much time to think. Cuss an old scow, anyway! It's demoralizing to be aboard of one."

"Come here, Dove," called Captain Katon. "Shake hands with my old chum, Cap'n Aaron Sproul—and the two of you call it all off."

Mate Dove did it so handsomely that the cap'n, his props knocked out from under him by that marriage certificate, met him halfway. Furthermore, right then the passengers, who had just understood the nature of the romance, were cheering the bride and groom uproariously.

"Hand me a megaphone," cried Cap'n Sproul.

While he waited for it he addressed Mate Love.

"I reckon it all come of me being on a scow. It was no place for a deep-water man. It looks different now that I'm on a real deck. I apologize for trying to break up what I know will be a happy married life. And now that I see what a fool I made of myself, I'll take the contract to bring Fritt around



to common sense. Knowing Fritt as you do, Mate Dove, you'll realize that I'm proposing to do penance in mighty thorough shape. If we get through without him licking me or me licking him, we'll do better than I think. But I'll guarantee to bring him around. Leave it to me, Mate Dove."

"Cap'n Sproul, I haven't the language," blurted Mate Dove. "I'd like to tell you just how I feel, but I can't do it." He called his wife. She came hurrying, for there was a quaver of eagerness in his voice. "Nina, kiss good Cap'n Sproul. He's our friend."

Her fresh young mouth saluted him.

"Now kiss him once more—this time for me, seeing that I can't do it myself," commanded Mate Dove, using his authority as a husband for the first time.

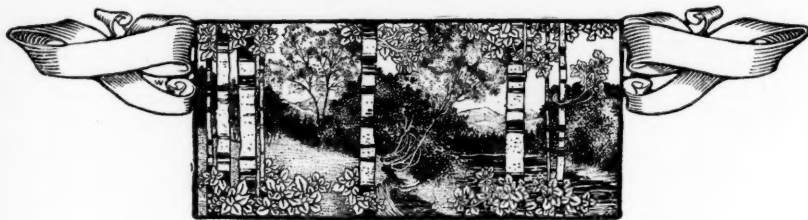
A man shoved the megaphone into Cap'n Sproul's nervous hands. He was secretly glad to shield his mouth with it, for the passengers were grinning, and

he feared that Mate Dove, in his ecstasy, might request Nina to kiss him for the two aunts, with perhaps an extra one to carry away for the mitigation of the wrath of Father Fritt.

"Ahoy, the *Ripple*!" bawled the cap'n. "This is Cap'n Sproul. Heave up that forward anchor. Let her swing out of the channel to the kedge. Step lively!"

"He'll think I'm bringing her," said the cap'n, walking to the ladder. "It's going to be a debate between us that wouldn't sound well in a Sunday-school lyceum—but I'll make him send his forgiveness, Mate Dove and Mrs. Dove, even if I have to chase him to a telegraph office to-morrow, heaving bricks at him all the way. My best hopes for a happy honeymoon!"

And he went over the side, noting from the corner of his eye that the old *Ripple* was swinging to afford free passage.



### With a Mirror to a Lady

LITTLE mirror, go and say  
To a lady far away,  
She may look at you and see  
What seems loveliest to me  
Of all lovely things that be.

Show her the sweet reason why  
For her constantly I sigh;  
Prithee, help me thus to woo,  
Giving her my point of view  
As reflected fair in you.

As no other image there  
In your silvery depths may share,  
While her own assumes the space;  
In my heart there is no place,  
Now, for any other face.

R. D. LUCAS.



*Devotes five minutes to putting at complete and happy ease the governess.*

## Good Manners---Masculine and Feminine

By Hildegard Lavender

ILLUSTRATED BY H. VON S. LUCAS

THIS is an essay without a conclusion, an inquiry with no very clear answer, an exposition with no neat, decisive "Q. E. D." to be appended to it. The writer, being a woman, believes quite securely in the kind-heartedness, the pitiful tenderness, the active benevolence of her own sex. Not being a man, she has never been able to rid herself of the ancient convention that man, by nature and training, is rougher, rudier, more brutally direct, less sensitive, less considerate, less soothing than his sister. She is quite sure that, without woman, society—using the word in its limited sense—would become a barbarous thing, mannerless, noisy, quarrelsome.

And yet she is free to confess that

since she left the schoolroom, and her masculine horizon widened to include others than brothers, cousins, and instructors, she has never beheld a man of the class to which the term "gentleman" is technically applied snubbing any other human creature—outside the privileged area of his own home, at any rate—and that she has seen countless women of the same class administer countless snubbings to all sorts of people, both within and without their own homes. Woman, the ministering angel of truthful tradition; man, the ruthless devastator of delicacies, according to the same venerable authority; and yet who has ever seen a man deliberately crush, snub, or freeze a fellow being? And who has been so fortunate as to

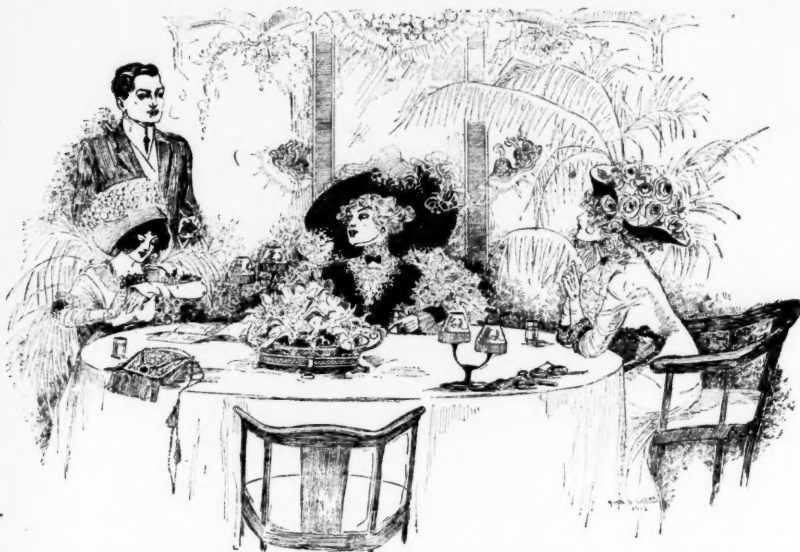
move in the thrice-blessed, Christian-minded circle where the sight of women crushing, snubbing, and freezing their fellow beings has never been witnessed?

Again let me say that these remarks apply only to men and women in the pursuit of relaxation, of social intercourse; that this is a drawing-room investigation, so to speak, and makes no claim to be an exhaustive study of masculine and feminine manners in general.

My limited circle numbers but a few of the class of masculine butterflies, but

mate, this manner. It seems to be not so much a personal tribute as the spontaneous result of a happy, healthy friendliness, of a youthful expectation of enjoyment which has withstood the experience of forty odd winters and summers; for neither of my butterfly acquaintances is a youth in years, however youthful his spirit may seem.

That this slightly effervescent warmth of manner—palpably superficial, and therefore rather the pleasanter, as requiring no heavy drain upon one's grati-



*My own nod to Farrelly was curt in the extreme.*

it does contain two specimens of the genus. One of these happens to be a man of brains, the other is not so conspicuously gifted in this way. Yet they both have the same charm—of a sort of fluent cordiality, as it were. Their eyes light pleasantly when they meet acquaintances, no matter how drearily uninteresting the acquaintances may be; their handshake is warm, friendly, no matter how swiftly they escape the society of the owner of the shaken hand. It is not gushing, it is not hypocritically, Micawberly affectionate, it is not inti-

tude—is a quality of sex, and not of class, has been proved time and time again for me by Hetherington—butterfly number one—and his sister. And yet she is rather a friendly woman, as women go.

For example, they come walking into a country-house sitting room late in the afternoon; Hetherington radiates good humor, joy of exercise, affability; Miss Hetherington radiates the joy of exercise, cordiality toward her intimates, bland and rather overwhelming indifference toward the rest of the world. It

may be that hour beloved of poets and loathed of afternoon callers—the children's hour; the governess is pouring tea and hating the job. Hetherington greets his hostess and his host with bubbling pleasure, tosses the youthful hope of the fond parents toward the ceiling, fills the sister of the youthful hope with gurgles of rapture by promising to "tie her in a bowknot" on some subsequent occasion, and then devotes five minutes to putting at complete and happy ease the governess, who is not from the pages of romance, a lovely young thing with a single rose in her hair, but from Nova Scotia, with a hard-working, ungraceful ancestry behind her.

Miss Hetherington has meantime said a careless "Hello, kids!" to Billie and babe, nods coolly at the governess with a crisp, little, "Howdy do, Miss Porter?" and has proceeded straight to an intimate, governess-excluding conversation with her hostess.

The doctor's wife, who happens—simply happens; she might as typically have been a *grande dame*—to be a shy, dowdy, little woman congenitally unable to handle a tea plate, a cup and saucer, and a muffin without disaster, comes in to call. Miss Hetherington acknowledges her introduction with a pleasant, absent smile and a correct word or two; she waits—obviously waits—for her hostess to finish the necessary remarks to the newcomer, and then she takes up the thread of her own discourse again. Has her hostess seen the pink stucco villa which the Pelless are building at Hempstead, under the apparent delusion that Hempstead is Italy? No? Well, all that she can say—et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

But Hetherington has meantime discovered that the doctor's wife's uncle and his own grandfather were classmates in Bowdoin, and he has put a stand at her elbow for some of the tea impedimenta; and all without losing the opportunity to tell what he also thinks of the Pelless' pink castle.

And they go off, Hetherington leaving warmth behind him, Miss Hetherington, albeit she has done nothing rude, leaving a faintly hostile critical spirit.

The other afternoon the subject was brought home to me more forcefully than usual by the fact that within a few hours I chanced to see a man and a woman in their treatment of an old acquaintance who had left the pale of good society—the pale of even more important precincts than good society.

I happened to be lunching in a restaurant. Toward a little table opposite me wandered Bronson, good, respectable, hard-working, ordinary citizen. He was still scanning the menu card when Farrelly, an old acquaintance of many of us, appeared in the doorway and stood looking uncertainly about him.

My own nod to Farrelly was curt in the extreme. I admit it without compunction. For did I not have my young niece with me, and a girl friend of hers, and were there not a thousand excellent reasons why I should intimate disapproval, a desire for no nearer intercourse, to Farrelly, whose sagging cheeks, puffy eyes, uncertain glance, unwholesome color, all corroborated the testimony of his shaking hands as he held his hat, and the reports that had followed him for years?

Farrelly had become a common sot. Every one who had known him in the old days, when he was merely a moderate drinker, knew it. Every one was glad that he usually had either too much shame or too little cash to frequent his old haunts. Every one found it much easier to bemoan a Farrelly sunk beneath the surface than to know how to treat a Farrelly emerging.

Well, Bronson happened to look up from his menu card while Farrelly stood there. For a second he did not seem to recognize his old associate—when Farrelly was still in the running he worked on the same dull, scholarly, respectable review as Bronson. But when he had looked beyond the wreck that stood before him, and had seen the man of the past behind the nervous, unhealthy-looking creature of the present, Bronson's quiet face lighted up—actually lighted up!—and he went to the door and shook the limp hand, and bore Farrelly off to his table.

And Bronson makes no pretense of

being a missionary; he knows that it is quite beyond any human power to reform Farrelly; and he is no kinder than the rest of the world—not half so kind as his wife, for example, whom I met later in the afternoon.

It was at the house of a woman not long resident in New York—a friendly, Southern woman, who had the charming, eminently unsafe habit of asking everybody whom she met to come and see her because she was so lonely in unneighborly New York. She had invited Mrs. Bronson, and me, and a half dozen others of the women whom we met at her tea table that afternoon, without requiring any other references as to our characters and our station in life than we carried about with us on our faces, or than was afforded by our presence at the luncheon where she had met us. And she hadn't acquired even so much of a reference from the woman who came in by and by, and who turned out to be a chance traveling acquaintance of hers.

Mrs. Bronson and I caught our breath, and looked excitedly at each other when the Other Woman came in, for she was more than a chance traveling acquaintance of ours. She was the sort of person who is sufficiently indicated by capitalizing the words "The Other Woman." Once we had known her very well in the suburb where we all lived; we had sat on her piazza, borrowed her patterns, eaten her dinners, played golf with her at the club, begun to criticize her, withdrawn slowly from her, and had finally seen her develop from one of us into the Other Woman, who had made a scandal in our little community, and had, in the accepted parlance, "broken up two homes."

After the necessary, ugly divorces, she had moved away, and there had been rumors that the other party to the wretched scandal and she were to marry. But he had died before that rehabilitating process had been gone through, and here she was, with the old name, the old looks, though somewhat faded, somewhat worn, and, when she saw us, somewhat frightened.

I don't know whether it is down upon

my eternal record as an act of cowardice or one of benevolence that I smiled and offered her my hand, and assured Mrs. Southerner that I already knew the Other Woman. I don't know whether it is down upon Mrs. Bronson's celestial score card as simple honesty or as hardness of heart that she merely nodded, with compressed lips, when she was introduced to the Other Woman, and that she conspicuously turned her shoulder toward that lady, and asked the Southerner's aged mother—through an ear trumpet—if she preferred New York to Richmond.

I do know that I made my escape as soon as possible from an embarrassing situation. I also know that Mrs. Bronson stayed late, in order, as she herself told me, to put the Southern woman on her guard "against that creature." And yet I know that Mrs. Bronson is a kind woman, and that Bronson has not spent half the time, energy, or money in works of true benevolence as she has.

"One must draw the line somewhere," Mrs. Bronson informed me later when I laid before her my objections to her behavior at the Southerner's tea table. "One must draw the line somewhere. How else is the world we live in to be kept fit for our daughters? That's part of the work we women have to do in the world—to maintain standards so that the next generation may have a respectable place in which to play about."

I suggested mildly that this seemed to me a task as important to fathers as to mothers, to men as to women, and I pointed out that, nevertheless, men were obviously more easy-going in their social attitude, more charitable to wanderers from the beaten path—masculine as well as feminine—than women. I cited the case of her own husband's greeting of Farrelly. Mrs. Bronson's face softened.

"Fred always loved that poor drunkard," she said. "He's the best soul, Fred!"

"Well, you used to be rather fond of the Other Woman," I reminded her. "And you're not accounted a monument of hard-heartedness yourself."

"That's all very true," she responded.



*Mrs. Bronson and I looked excitedly at each other when the Other Woman came in.*

"But this is the way I reason it out. Men are severe in their business judgments and lax in their social ones because business is their job. Women, for the most part, have no other job, outside their own four walls, than society. They are therefore severe in their social judgments."

It was a theory worth consideration, and the longer I have pondered it, the more truth I have seemed to discover in it. The good workman is rigid in his requirements in his own trade. The good lawyer cannot bear a slovenly brief, the good carpenter a joining that gaps, a warped board, the good surgeon a ragged operation, the good writer a sloppy piece of English, the good cobbler a clumsily sewed shoe. From those

associated with them in their various businesses they demand a certain standard of work and character.

If my lord, the head of my household, chances, for example, to be one of a firm of insurance brokers, he will tolerate no loosely drawn description of the property he insures, though he may not trouble himself in the least about the indefiniteness of the estimate the upholsterer gives me in regard to doing over the old chairs. He will dismiss a light-fingered office boy with great dispatch, though he will probably merely shrug his shoulders and smile cynically when I tell him that I am almost sure that Dinah, the colored cook, is feeding half a household uptown on filchings from my larder.



"She's a good cook, isn't she?" he will reply. "Why bother? What you can't lock up, make up your mind to lose, and don't worry about it."

If I should say similarly to him: "Dickie seems an alert and polite little fellow. Why dismiss him for stealing stamps and office supplies? Just count them up to profit and loss, and let it go at that," he would sternly regard me as an unmoral, if not an immoral, creature, and would demand whether I thought the great insurance business could be conducted upon such slatternly and improper principles as that?

So, I dare say, every candidate for a position in any office, in any business, is as critically scanned as ever an aspirant for social position. It is a more direct examination to which he is subjected. His prospective employer, his possible partner, may ask him bluntly his age, his business pedigree, his affiliations; may demand, without having discourtesy imputed to him, that the fresh aspirant's old books be submitted to his inspection. He may ask outrightly whether or not the young man who wants a contract with his firm drinks, whether he is married or single, to how many clubs he belongs, and in what year he was graduated from college. The candidate for a position thinks none of these questions prying, expects the investigation, is not offended by the directness of the method.

Neither is the new employee, or the old one, for that matter, surprised or disconcerted when he is brought to book for his business errors, when his work is harshly criticized, when he is warned that inattention to the rules of his office, the necessities of his position, will result in his dismissal.

Now, for business read society, for man read woman, for seeker after a job read seeker after acquaintance, after a place in any given social circle. Women are the guardians of that world, whether it is the great one of fashion or the little one of suburban cliques.

But it is not permitted them to be outright, and downright, and upright in their investigations. They may not ask Mrs. X, just arrived in the richest of


the Newtons or the most resplendent of the Oranges, for permission to look over her accounts. They may merely scan her dress, her house, her motor-car equipment, appraise her dinners, study her manners, and form their own judgment on her social solvency.

And this habit—generations old, race old, perhaps—of silent scanning, of quick, furtive calculation, of holding at arm's length until scrutiny has proved the desirability of nearer relations, this habit has naturally given a certain tone and quality to the entire manner of woman as a social being. It is not that she is less kind, less broadly charitable, than man; it is merely that she applies with some subtlety to her business the methods he applies with brutal directness to his business.

Already there are signs of the dawn of a more democratic age even for the feminine world. You cannot rub shoulders with a clever and able woman at a committee meeting, where her intellectual contribution to the needs of the hour are quite as brilliant as your own, and go away feeling that you must snub her if you run across her in a friend's drawing-room because she lives on an unfashionable street, or because her mother was chambermaid in a hotel and never acquired sufficient fortune to live the humble fact gloriously down.


It is probable that even in the millennial period, where every woman has brains, energy, and time for some other pursuit than the purely domestic and the purely social, we shall still all prefer to take our relaxation in the company of those who have the same ideals concerning the place of the fork in feeding and the proper function of the saucer; we shall probably continue to prefer to consort with those who have, broadly speaking, the same moral ideas as we ourselves. Even men exclude some of their fellow men from their clubs.

But within certain broad circles of similarity of custom, Society, with the capital S, is going to be a region of much more vital good-fellowship and much more lively interests, when woman, its dictator, brings a new standard of tolerance to it.



# The SUBSTITUTE.

BY  
W.B.M. FERGUSON



ILLUSTRATED BY MAYO BUNKER

## SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

John Grahame, a successful artist, discovers that his half-brother, Spencer, has deserted his wife Eileen. The latter has been taken very ill in consequence, and removed to a hospital, where Grahame finds her. She is blind and has no desire to live. She mistakes John Grahame for Spencer—their voices are very much alike—and at once begins to improve. The doctor declares that if she discovers the mistake it will kill her. So Grahame, with the doctor's connivance, continues the deception, and takes her to a small town, called Colchester, where they pass as Mr. and Mrs. Spencer Grahame. Here a man named Hock, who has lived with Spencer and Eileen in a lodging house in New York, discovers them and threatens John Grahame with blackmail, but Grahame frightens him off. Shortly after Spencer himself arrives in Colchester.

## A TWO-PART STORY—PART II.

### CHAPTER IX.

AS Grahame entered the drawing-room, Spencer ceased humming a little, French chanson, and carelessly tossed upon the table a portfolio of sketches he had been idly leafing over. He had materially altered in appearance since Grahame last saw him; his shoulders had broadened; the clean look of youth had vanished from his face; it was heavier, blunted in outline. The Vandyke beard gave him a distinguished, commanding air; and, curiously enough, rather than being blond, it was jet black, affording a strange contrast to his blue eyes. Now that his weak mouth and chin were effectually concealed, the family likeness between the half brothers was more pronounced.

There was rather a strained silence after Grahame had unobtrusively locked the door, each eyeing the other as if taking stock and making mental notes; then Spencer, as usual, took command of the situation with the easy graciousness and aplomb native to him.

"How are you, anyway?" he queried, offering a plump, white hand, which, after a moment's hesitation, the other took and gripped heartily. "I'm glad to see you, Jack, old man. Over two years, isn't it?"

"Yes, over two years," Grahame vaguely agreed. He was unaffectedly glad to see Spencer, quite aside from what this unexpected gift of fortune, this eleventh-hour arrival, might mean to Eileen. The reunion in itself was much to him. All his old affection awoke, and much of the bitterness he had treasured up passed away as he fixedly regarded the other. "You've changed greatly," he said kindly. "Your hair is so dark I hardly recognized you."

"Funny it should come in black?" laughed Spencer, lighting a cigarette and, under cover of the action, darting a keen glance at the other. Such was the opening dialogue between these two who desired to learn so much.

It was Grahame who finally broke the ice, characteristically plunging straight to the depths.

"I suppose you know I've been looking for you for some time," he stated rather than queried. "You saw my personals in the Boston papers."

Spencer nodded.

"Yes," he said coolly, blowing smoke. "And I believe you also went to the trouble of hiring a detective—he's the main cause of this visit, by the way."

"Then he isn't the failure I thought him," commented Grahame, imitating the other's coolness. "I was almost convinced private-detective agencies were of small account."

"On the contrary, they're extremely capable—I mean such a one as you employed," said Spencer, nodding in the same casual manner. "You must take into account they had a difficult assignment, for my physical appearance isn't what it was."

"No, but several days ago I told them you now wore beard and mustache, and I made a very fair sketch of how you must appear; of course, the coloring was different, for I'd no idea your hair would be so dark."

"Nor I," smiled Spencer, caressing a slender ankle. "I use a very good hair dye, one I can highly recommend. I rather suspected some one had given away the fact of my wearing a beard—or possessed the intelligence to guess I would cultivate one—so dyeing was compulsory, you might say. You'll admit it makes a baffling change. But this detective is a rather clever fellow, and soon took up the new trail. He suspects I'm the man he's been attempting to run down in the past, but isn't quite sure, you see. I'm tired dodging him, Jack, so I want you to call him off, for he's becoming a bit of a nuisance. I'd some difficulty in coming down here without his knowledge, and I don't know if I've been entirely successful," glancing at the windows. "Now that you know I'm living and well, there's no sense in attempting to have me shadowed. Besides, I decidedly object to it."

"A detective wouldn't have been employed had you not—well, done what you did," said Grahame, rather astounded at the other's coolness. "Why didn't you answer my personals?"

Private reasons, Jack. I knew I must be causing a lot of worry—you always were an affectionate sort of fellow—but I simply had to lie low. I was afraid of making known my whereabouts even to you; afraid your personals might be a plant, a trap baited by another to catch me. Some one making use of your name, you see?"

"I see it's evident you're unaware of what I know," replied Grahame. "I thought this visit presupposed—How did you learn I was living in Colchester? To my knowledge, but one or two intimate friends know of it."

"Oh, I didn't learn it through your friends," said Spencer, with the shadow of a smile. "In fact, I'd a devil of a time trying to locate you after I'd made up my mind to do so. No one in New York knew where you'd gone; not a blessed soul. It was *you* who told me."

"How?"

"Well, you were in New York the other day, weren't you?" laughed Spencer. "I saw you, quite by accident, in the Pennsylvania Station. I was in a corner reading the paper, and you passed—either without seeing or recognizing me. I saw you buy your ticket, and a few questions elicited the information it was for Colchester. Purely elementary, Watson, as Sherlock Holmes would say. I couldn't speak to you then, for I was busy dodging your detective, who had followed me to the station."

For the second time, a rather hunted, apprehensive look crept into his eyes as he furtively glanced at the windows.

"Then," said Grahame, "you're unaware that I know everything concerning Eileen?"

Spencer's eyes flickered, and he lost color.

"That's news," he said, watching the other narrowly. "However, I thought it wasn't altogether unlikely, for I knew you were in town, and it was only natural to suppose you might run across her."

The coolness and indifference both in words and manner staggered Grahame.

"What kind of a man are you, Spencer?" he cried. "Have you no human feeling whatsoever, or are you sim-

ply posing as a monster? Do you know what Eileen went through after your cold-blooded desertion? Have you the faintest idea? I'm speaking merely of her physical suffering. You left her penniless——"

"Hold on there! I didn't!" said Spencer, flushing with anger. "I gave her ample money to return to Sharon, and if she stuck on at that infernal boarding house and piled up a mountain of debt—as you insinuate—that's her fault and not mine. I told her I was through, and couldn't stand it any longer. She agreed to it, too. You're so damned melodramatic," he finished petulantly. "I'd hoped you'd got over it. And I see you haven't mastered the vice of butting in. I didn't come here for a dressing down by you or any one. I won't tolerate this sickening holier-than-thou, elder-brother attitude of yours. The Lord knows I'm no angel, and never pretended to be one, but the artistic temperament——"

"Surely you're not taking refuge in that!" exclaimed Grahame. "That shoddy excuse of your boyhood! If you're old enough and man enough to dispense with all advice, then you should be man enough to stand up to your sins, mistakes, and errors. I don't see how any man could treat any woman the way you've treated Eileen. You were left a small fortune, and yet you never sent her one cent, nor seemingly cared what became of her."

"How could I when I hadn't even enough for myself?" flared Spencer. "As usual, you don't know what you're talking about. But fire ahead, condemn me unheard; it'll be quite like old times. Would I have gone to that beastly hashery, in the first place, if I'd been flush? If you want to know, I lost every sou of what you call a fortune in Paris—lost it over the green table," he finished, half flippantly, half defiantly.

"I never knew you gambled to that excess," said Grahame slowly. "Couldn't you have cabled me or a friend?"

"Am I not supposed to have even any pride? What?" said Spencer. "The friends who would cable me money—well, I've yet to meet them. As for you

—never! I knew how you'd take on over it. You always took everything too seriously. We came over in the second cabin."

"Is that the reason you religiously kept out of my way after you'd returned?"

Spencer nodded carelessly, and helped himself to another cigarette.

"I'd been studying high art in Paris—your kind of art," he added, with a good-humored sneer; "but I couldn't make a go of it. When I came home I was up against it. It took a long time to break into commercial art again—there's so many Johnnies doing that kind of stuff. In fact, I'm only getting a new footing now. I know," he continued, "it looks, at first glance, to an outsider as if Eileen got a pretty raw deal; but when you know the inside facts, you'll see there was nothing else to do. I suppose she's given you a long, sad history——"

"Eileen has never mentioned a word of what happened that night."

"Well, that's like her," commented Spencer, his expression softening. "She never was a whiner. I'll say that for her. Well, you see, Jack, I was strapped for money, the romantic business was played out, and so we agreed to separate. It was the only thing to do. She was to return to her folks in Sharon, and I turned over every spare sou I owned. That was all I could do."

"You didn't tell her you had a commission to paint portraits in Boston?"

"Wish I had," replied Spencer, shrugging. "I did eventually land in Boston, but I'd no commission to paint anything."

Grahame now realized the Boston commission had been an invention of Eileen's; a sop to Mrs. Blugsby's inquisitiveness. He had suspected as much.

"Then you left Eileen simply because you could no longer support her?" he pursued. "Didn't you give her any reason to believe you'd return?"

"Not one," said Spencer emphatically; "though she may have hung on, thinking I'd change my mind. I dare



"You may put down that poker. I'll be back in a minute."

say if things had broken better for us, we wouldn't have parted so soon; but, really, the romance was played out, and I thought it better to have it over and done with. It's the best thing to do; have one final, complete break. Devilish hard at the time, I know; but it pays in the end. I knew we wouldn't be happy until we were free, quit of each other."

"Oh, you did? Did you tell Eileen you intended marrying again?"

Spencer's eyes narrowed unpleasantly.

"Then she *has* been talking? I thought so," he said, with curling lip.

"Eileen hasn't, but Miss Burr has."

Spencer smothered an oath.

"What do you know about Miss Burr?" he cried angrily. "Now look here, Jack. I've had more than enough of this inquisition business! Confound your impudence! I dare say when you

learned about Eileen, you went straight to Julie——"

"On the contrary; she came here," said Grahame steadily. "She hunted me out when you didn't answer her letters. It was she who told me of your secret engagement, that you had never broken the old intimacy with her."

"Did you tell her about Eileen? Did you or did you not?" rasped Spencer.

"I certainly did."

"I knew it!" stormed Spencer, throwing out his hands as if appealing to an understanding audience. "A fine character you've given me, I bet! Trust you to do the decent thing every time! I'll have a nice time squaring myself!" flinging himself about in the old, undisciplined, pettish

manner of his early youth. "Lord! What a brother for a man to have!"

"I don't see how you expected to keep it secret," said Grahame, staring at the other. "Or, in fact, what you hoped to gain by such secrecy. More than once I've imagined you're of unsound mind; mentally irresponsible. That's the only excuse I can give for your actions. Telling Miss Burr you and I had quarreled over her, that I secretly loved her, and hated you as the accepted suitor—well, she believed that childish, futile, unwarranted lie. I see it was told for the purpose of keeping us apart, so that I wouldn't inadvertently mention Eileen; my absence from the city, which you admit having known, made the scheme the more probable of success. But you made the mistake of thinking a lie will live forever; of making a statement which a chance meeting with Julie, on

my part, would have instantly branded as false."

"I didn't want the lie to live forever," said Spencer calmly. "I won't deny I told it; but if you were a broad-minded man of the world it wouldn't have been necessary. You look at such things in an infernally narrow, Puritanical way, and I knew you'd raise a row over it to Julie—as you have done. Then the idea of you being secretly in love with Julie and quarreling with me— Well, it was really a joke, as any one will readily admit who knows you."

Grahame smiled sadly.

"Spencer, has it come to this?" he asked slowly. "That you utterly fail to see the wrong you've done Miss Burr, quite aside from the way Eileen's been treated? Come, this is merely a pose of yours. You think me old-fashioned, old-womanish, and take a delight in shocking me. Isn't that it? You can't make me believe you're minus all principle and honor."

"You're a ranting old minister, Jack," interrupted Spencer, with patient disgust; "but I'm blessed if I know what you're sermonizing about this time. How have I wronged Julie Burr? If it's a crime for a man not to confess every peccadillo of his youth to his fiancée, why, then, I'm guilty; but I'd rather be that than an ass. What man ever does? What good would it do? Who hasn't sinned in some shape or form? I suppose your idea is I should have confessed everything concerning Eileen to Julie. Not only about Eileen, but many others—"

Grahame had arisen, and, hands gripping the desk until the knuckles showed white, was staring in a manner Spencer had never seen. Mr. Hock had seen that glare, that tension of the huge frame, that clenching of the powerful, well-shaped hands; and his chivalrous, little heart had turned to water and the water to ice. For Grahame had a temper few men had seen or few men care to see. It was not the passion paraded on occasion by the average human, but a devastating fury, difficult to arouse, difficult to allay, which only an iron will and discipline kept in leash.

"You say Eileen and 'many others,'" said Grahame slowly, speaking with difficulty. "What precisely do you mean by that?"

Spencer eyed him in a wondering manner, but remained silent as Grahame added:

"Of course, I realize it's not my place—or it should not be necessary—for me to resent the manner in which a husband speaks of his wife. Short of physical violence, the law permits a husband to behave as he sees fit. For your sake, and—for all our sakes, I've said nothing of the scurrilous way you've treated Eileen."

"Because it's none of your business," interrupted Spencer. "It's not your affair. You've no right—"

"I've the best right in the world!" thundered Grahame, crashing a fist upon the desk. "Now, look out, Spencer! I want peace, not war. There's a side to me you don't know. I don't wish you to know it if—I can humanly help it. If you'll so far insult your wife as to class her with those 'others,' I won't permit it. I tell you I won't—"

"My wife?" cried Spencer. "Don't be a fool, Jack! Didn't you say you knew everything about Eileen? Well, then, you know very well she has no legal claim on me whatsoever. She never had, and never will have."

Grahame covered his face with twitching hands, and sank into the chair, cowering back and pressing shut his eyes as if blinded by a bolt of flame.

## CHAPTER X.

"I thought you knew all the time, or I wouldn't have told you, especially if you're going to be so melodramatic over it," said Spencer sullenly at length. "You needn't act as if I were some ghastly spectacle you wanted to shut out. Do you mean to say you thought me cad enough to desert a wife—"

Grahame dropped his hands. His eyes were bloodshot, congested. He resembled an animal at bay.

"What you said is a lie!" he exclaimed thickly. "A foul lie!"



An insistent knocking on the door interrupted him, and he became conscious of the fact that he had raised his voice almost to a shout. He now knew the knocking had been going on for some time. He felt as if battling with the phantasmagoria of some hideous nightmare.

Spencer, looking rather white and shaken, had edged into a far corner, from which he eyed Grahame in a furtive, sullen, apprehensive manner that he desperately strove to cloak with a sickly air of confidence. He had surreptitiously seized the heavy poker from the fireplace, and was holding it behind him as if half ashamed of his fears, yet thoroughly believing in them.

Grahame arose and walked heavily to the door. It was the maid, and she appeared nervous and frightened.

"A gentleman to see you, sir."

"I'm not at home to any one," interrupted Grahame.

"So I told him, sir; but he insisted on coming in, and he says he must see you. He—he pushed past me. He's in the music room." This was across the hall from the drawing-room. "He acts wild like, and I didn't know what to do but tell you," finished the servant.

"Say I'll see him presently," commanded Grahame. He closed the door, and, turning to Spencer, added: "You may put down that poker. I'll be back in a minute."

Spencer had overheard the greater part of the maid's whispered message.

"Have you any idea who this visitor may be?" he asked nervously.

"It may be a fellow who has been trying to blackmail me," returned Grahame, speaking with an effort, his eyes alone showing the conflict he had come through.

"Look here," said Spencer jerkily. "I've some reason to believe an enemy of mine has been camping on my trail. I see you thought I'd been lying low all these months, changing my name and appearance, going from pillar to post, because I didn't want—want Eileen to get track of me. You evidently thought I wished to secure a—a divorce or something," glancing furtively at the other,

conscious of retreading extremely perilous ground.

"Go on," commanded Grahame, steadily eying the carpet.

"Well, it wasn't Eileen I was dodging," pursued Spencer, reassured by the other's self-control.

"Was it the law?" said Grahame heavily.

"No; though I suppose to your mind I'm as good as a criminal," with a show of his old, indifferent manner. "No; it's merely a little private matter. I never saw the fellow, but he imagines he has some sort of grievance against me—at least, I heard so. He's a crank who—"

"Why didn't you have him arrested?"

"Because I've never even seen the fellow, I tell you. He hasn't attempted my life. I merely heard he was a crank and had a grudge against me. Oh, well, I can't explain it. It sounds silly."

"It does," agreed Grahame. "Perhaps it's only imagination."

"The working of a guilty conscience, eh? You might as well say what you think," said Spencer flippantly. "There may be truth in it, for we can't go through life without treading on somebody's toes—at least, ordinary mortals can't."

"Then you have some suspicion this visitor might be your man?"

"I wouldn't be at all surprised," said Spencer, with a devil-may-care air. "I've been expecting some such visit. He may have followed me down here. You see, I couldn't tell whether I was being followed by your detective or by the other Johnny. Have you any idea what your detective looks like?"

"No."

"Well, some one's been making careful inquiries about me, following me from pillar to post," said Spencer, with a shrug. "From all accounts there are two of them; one a clean-shaven chap, the other wearing a mustache. Quite like a dime-novel thriller, eh?"

"Perhaps both are from the agency," said Grahame.

"Or perhaps it's but the one man wearing a disguise. That's what I came to see you about."

"Why not step into the music room and see for yourself?"

"Give me a gun and I will."

"As bad as that?"

"Perhaps. I can't afford to take chances," said Spencer, flushing. "I wouldn't have been dodging all these months if I hadn't thought it serious. I'm no coward, but I want a run for my money. I object to being shot in the back without warning. I tell you the fellow's a crank, and may do anything."

"I think it's pure imagination," said Grahame, in the same stony monotone; "but I'll see this man and question him. If by any chance he turns out to be your crank and evinces homicidal tendencies, I'll turn him over to the police."

"Perhaps you could send the servant for a policeman just on general principles," suggested Spencer. "Or call headquarters on the phone, eh?"

"If you're not afraid, I'm sure I'm not," replied Grahame, with a bitter smile. "Stay here. I won't be long."

The visitor was a shabby-looking young man, with a strangely gaunt, haggard face, and sunken eyes that smoldered as with living fire. His right hand lay concealed in the pocket of a well-worn, lightweight overcoat which enveloped his lank figure. He stood facing the closed door, his attitude that of tense, listening expectancy; and as Grahame turned the knob, the other's hand flashed from his pocket, and the light flickered upon dull, blue steel.

Grahame had never been nearer instant death than at that moment; and this he realized as he took in the situation at a glance. He remained impassive in the doorway, his eyes on the other, well knowing the peril of sudden movement.

"Good evening," he said quietly at length. "I believe you wish to see me."

And with studied indifference he turned his back on the weapon and closed the door.

"Are you Mr. Grahame?" hoarsely demanded the visitor, fingering the revolver. "Mr. Spencer Grahame?"

"No, I'm not. I'm John Grahame."

The visitor slipped the revolver into his pocket, an action of which Grahame simulated ignorance. Not once had his eyes strayed to the weapon.

"You look a bit like Spencer Grahame," said the haggard young man. "Your voice is like his. Have you been shaving off that Vandyke, eh?"

Suspicion had leaped to his eyes, and he stepped forward.

"I've said my name isn't Spencer," said Grahame curtly. "Come, what is all this about? What is your business? What do you want?"

"No, I see you're not Spencer Grahame," mumbled the other, staring fixedly. "Queer you should have the same voice and name, and look a bit like him. Maybe you're a relative of his, eh? I hadn't thought of that—Ah! you would; would you?"

Grahame, without warning, had rushed his visitor, confident of his own quickness—belied by his bulk—for he knew he could be at handgrips with the other before the revolver could be drawn. The struggle was over almost before it had begun, Grahame doubling his adversary over his knee like any child, and wrenching free the weapon.

"Now," he said, stepping back and pocketing the revolver, "is there any reason why I shouldn't turn you over to the police on the charge of attempted murder?"

"I wouldn't have shot you," said the other dully. "Go ahead and call the police if you want to. I don't care."

"I must say you're a fine one to come on such an errand," commented Grahame. "Your nerves are all shot to pieces, and you haven't the strength of a child. A woman could have disarmed you." He was eying him not unkindly, noting the refined, sensitive face and feverish eyes. "Come," he gently added, "shooting people isn't quite the thing these days, and it won't make wrong right. Now, I'm Spencer Grahame's brother, and if you've any grievance against him, fancied or otherwise, suppose you let me hear it? Let us talk it over like sensible men. You won't have to use a pistol to get justice."

"My name is Carstairs," said the

other dully. "Frank Carstairs, of Sharon, New York—"

"God!" cried Grahame. The cry was wrung from him. "Then it wasn't a damnable lie! I won't believe—"

"So you know about my sister?" cried Carstairs wildly, springing to his feet. "Where is she? Where is your black-guard brother? As there's a God in heaven, I'll send him to the hell he came from!"

By main strength Grahame forced him back into the chair, and held him there with iron hands.

Here was a situation beyond belief in fact or fiction; a situation which the most brilliant, dispassionate diplomatist, unswayed by personal interest, might grapple with in vain. Here was Spencer ignorant of the fact that Eileen shared the same roof, ignorant that her brother—though he had certain suspicions—was just across the hall. In the same state of ignorance regarding each other and Spencer were Carstairs and Eileen. Grahame had thus an almost superhuman task to perform if murder was to be prevented and Eileen saved a shock that might unbalance reason. A diabolical fate was drawing these three sides of the triangle together, and to Grahame lay the task of preventing a conjunction. He would have need of all his self-command—for how could he hope to control others if he could not control himself?—and realization of this fact steadied him. By sheer force of will he quelled his own mental agony, and summoned every ounce of reserve power to meet the crisis.

"Carstairs," he said, keeping a heavy hand on the other's shoulder, "I want you to listen to me for a moment. There is no woman in the world of whom I think more highly than your sister Eileen. I would give my life for her, and I ask you to believe that that is no figure of speech or idle statement. I had every reason to believe her married to my brother; and even now, despite what I've learned and which your actions tend to corroborate, I will *not* believe to the contrary. I ask you to help me by facing this situation like a man, for I need help more than you.

You are her brother; but Eileen means, and ever will mean, more to me than can sister to brother, for the greatest happiness and honor I could ask in this life, or that to come, is the privilege of sharing it with her. Had I not known she was engaged to my brother, I would have asked her to marry me; and were she free at this moment I would try my luck. You are the first person to whom I've confessed all this, for neither by word nor manner have I given even Eileen to understand that I love her.

"I am trying, Carstairs, to make you understand that I am your friend, and why I *should* be your friend. I'm trying to show you that we must work together for Eileen's welfare, and not for the gratification of our own hatred. If killing would save Eileen, I would kill—but to know you as a murderer would complete her sorrow." Carstairs buried face in hands, while Grahame added: "You're only a boy with a man's troubles to shoulder—troubles that even I, a man grown, can hardly stand up to. I don't mean to preach, to salve your wounds with platitudes. I know what you've come through. I know what it is to see red, for I'm not a spectator, but a participant. Everything you've experienced has hit me, too. Do you believe me, Carstairs?"

In a dazed manner, the other looked up into Grahame's steady, earnest eyes. He nodded dully.

"Your faith in Eileen is justified," he said. "But it was an illegal marriage."

"I never suspected *that*," said Grahame, gray as death. "I don't see how it could be possible with the strict New York marriage laws. How could they secure a license? The present regulations effectually prevent such wrongs."

"They weren't married in New York, but New Jersey," said Carstairs. "At that time the present marriage-license law hadn't gone into effect. It's a recent law, and a license wasn't necessary. They were married by an old friend of your brother—a Mr. Lonsdale, formerly a minister in good standing, who had resigned under serious charges and had been expelled from the ministry. At the time he was unfrocked, and had no

more right to perform the ceremony than any layman. The marriage, performed at Lonsdale's house, was not registered; it was bogus, a vile trick. I'm sure of my facts.

"I met Spencer Grahame when he knew Eileen in Sharon. I am, or was, a traveling salesman, and seldom at home; but the little I saw of your brother made me dislike and distrust him, though I found there was little use saying anything to Eileen or my aunt, with whom we lived, for they believed him to be perfection, and, of course, I knew nothing against him. Then last spring I had to go West on my semiannual trip, and a month or so later, when in Chicago, I received a wire from Eileen saying she was married to Spencer Grahame and was sailing for Havre."

"Did you know she had been living in New York?"

"You may be sure I didn't. Eileen was financially independent in a small way, and could wind her aunt around her finger.

One was as unsophisticated as the other. They had never been far from Sharon, and had led a most secluded life."

"How did you learn the marriage was illegal?"

"Well, I'd nothing but suspicions to start with," said Carstairs, in a colorless voice. "Barring that telegram, I didn't receive a line from Eileen, nor did my aunt, who died shortly after the supposed marriage. Business kept me West for some time, and I was very busy. At first I didn't expect to hear from Eileen; the novelty of the trip and her happiness—"

"I understand. Now that she was married you thought you had misjudged Spencer?"



*Grahame doubled his adversary over his knee, and wrenched free the weapon.*

"Yes; for really I had had no right to doubt his integrity in the first instance. But as the months passed and I received no word I became uneasy. I did not know her address, but wrote, care of the American consul, without result. Somehow all my old suspicions awoke. I had terrifying dreams. I couldn't sleep. I couldn't eat. I knew just how worldly ignorant Eileen was. Well, the upshot was that I finally came to New York. I found there was no record of the marriage. I went over to Jersey, and investigation at length led me to Mr. Lonsdale—"

"Surely he didn't acknowledge it?"

"Hardly, for he had left the State on other charges, and is hiding out at this minute to the best of my knowledge.

From all accounts he's a thoroughly bad egg, and is wanted for a variety of felonies. No, I learned the details from a former servant who had been a witness to the illegal marriage.

"In the meantime," pursued Carstairs, "through my lawyer we had learned from the American consul in Paris that a Mr. and Mrs. Spencer Grahame, of New York, had been stopping for some time in the Rue Beauregard, and had lately left for Monte Carlo; so I resigned my position and sailed for Naples. I traced your brother through Italy, Monaco, Belgium, and then back to Paris; and, though I traveled in the cheapest way possible, my little savings were soon exhausted. In Paris I learned he had sailed for New York."

"On your return, didn't you find trace of Eileen in New York?"

"No. I lost complete track of them both. I wandered from one city to another, and finally one night in Boston came face to face with Spencer. I think recognition was mutual, and he read murder in my eyes, for he jumped into a waiting taxi, and was off before I got my wits together. I visited every hotel, and finally found where he had registered; but, of course, he was gone, though I succeeded in tracing his trunk to Baltimore." Carstairs shrugged, and wearily added: "What's the use of going into all the details? He was too clever for me. He had funds, and I hadn't. He changed his name and grew a Vandyke. He always kept ahead of me. I arrived in a city to find he'd left. I always arrived too late."

"Well, eventually I followed him back to New York, and to-day thought I saw him in the Pennsylvania Station, though I wasn't near enough to be sure. I learned this man whom I thought was your brother had bought a ticket for Colchester. I bought another, but was too late for the train. I waited for the next, and came here. When I learned that a Spencer Grahame lived in this house, I thought at last the chase was ended." He looked steadily at Grahame, and added: "I'm sure that man *was* your brother. Is he still in this house?"

Grahame returned the look for a long moment.

"I'll not lie to you, Carstairs," he said quietly. "He is—but you're not going to see him."

The other nodded his comprehension.

"The odds are still against me. You've got a gun, and have only to phone the police and turn me over—"

"That won't be necessary, Carstairs. I'm holding no threat over you. I won't use compulsion or force. I just want to try and make you understand, for your own sake and Eileen's, that murder won't help or adjust matters. It never did yet, and it never will."

"No, I suppose not," said the other dully. "I don't see how anything can be adjusted, for that matter. I suppose I've peculiar views, but I don't care much for what they call the conventions—I mean I don't want your brother to marry Eileen, as I suppose he would if it came to that or his life. A legal marriage wouldn't make things right. Merely for the sake of being legally married before the world, Eileen would have to take a proved blackguard for a husband. Could any woman be happy with a man like that? Do you understand?"

Grahame nodded.

"Some exorbitant prices are paid for the world's good opinion," he said.

"So I'd no idea of forcing your brother to marry Eileen," pursued Carstairs. "I merely wished to kill him in the interests of public safety. That is the only justice that can reach him."

Grahame was silent.

"Carstairs," he finally said, "in all this don't you think you've concentrated too much upon the wrong done and not enough upon Eileen herself? Instead of hunting down Spencer, shouldn't your first duty have been to find your sister, and give her the care and protection she evidently needed? I offer it merely as a suggestion."

"That's true," said the other, in the same stupefied manner. "Very true. Somehow to-night is the first time I've been able to think coherently, rationally. I thought Eileen would be with your

brother. I've lived in a madman's dream."

"And are on the verge of a nervous collapse," finished Grahame. "Will you leave this matter in my hands for to-night and return to New York? Will you pass your word of honor to that effect? You may satisfy yourself regarding Eileen's welfare. She is in good hands, with friends of mine whom she may command in any occasion. She has been with them for the past few months. You see, Carstairs, this matter is far more involved than even you imagine, and at present you're in no condition to learn all the details or pass judgment upon them. What you need is a complete rest, both mental and physical. You're not capable of grappling with the situation. I ask you to trust me, to have faith in me, to believe that in all this my sole consideration is Eileen and her future. It may have a better ending than you imagine. Being in possession of all the details, I consider myself more qualified, or better equipped, than you to fight for Eileen's happiness."

"I can believe that," said Carstairs slowly, long conscious of the other's indomitable personality. "And if I return to New York?"

"When you're gone I'll have a talk with Spencer," said Grahame. "You realize I'm taking no chances on having you meet him. To-morrow night I'll visit you in New York, acquaint you with everything about the matter, and take you to where Eileen is staying. Twenty-four hours' complete rest will clear your brain and steady your nerves, for, I repeat, matters are far more complicated than you imagine."

"You won't make any terms with your brother?"

"I'm not thinking of Spencer," said Grahame. "I've no power to make terms of any kind; but, regarding Eileen as I do, I feel qualified to act as a friend in her behalf. I merely ask you to put aside the thought of violence and leave matters as they are—that is all I ask for to-night. I don't demand or expect the impossible from you."

Carstairs arose and held out his hand.

"Somehow you've given me a grip on myself," he said unsteadily. "I—I feel you mean every word you've said. I need a friend—one like you. I think you will keep your promise."

Grahame seated himself at the desk and rapidly signed a blank check.

"You'll accept this loan in the spirit meant," he said. "Remember, Carstairs, we're standing together, and if you're my friend, you'll permit me to help you any way I can; not only in *one* way, but *every* way. That's what friendship means."

Carstairs hesitated, flushing darkly.

"I am desperately hard up—I suppose you saw that at a glance. Yet I can't accept—"

"Wouldn't you do the same were our positions reversed?" asked Grahame simply. "By accepting you'll show your faith in my friendship."

## CHAPTER XI.

Eleven was striking by the hall clock as Grahame reentered the drawing-room, where Spencer was nervously pacing back and forth.

"Well?" said the latter, noting Grahame's haggard face seamed with lines. "I see you've learned all. My suspicions were well founded. That was Carstairs. I heard his voice. Where has he gone?"

"Back to New York. He'll be in time for the eleven-thirty," said Grahame, with marked self-control.

"And what did he want?"

"Nothing—merely your life."

"Then he has shown his hand at last," said Spencer, paling. "I have a witness to his threat. I'll have him put under bonds."

"You can do more than that, Spencer. Carstairs very nearly shot me, thinking I was you. Why not have him arrested for carrying concealed weapons? Attempted murder? Finish your conduct toward Eileen by jailing her brother, for naturally it's criminal for him to be at all concerned in the matter. Of course, had you a sister who happened to be the innocent victim of a black-guard, you wouldn't feel in the least angry."



"Are you referring to me as a blackguard?"

"Perhaps that's too mild a term. If you knew how nearly murder was committed to-night just because you've played the blackguard——"

"Oh, I knew Carstairs was after me," said Spencer sullenly. "I suppose you believe that bluff about his going back to town? He knows I'm here, and will wait for me. See if he doesn't. That's as much as you think of my life."

"I've thought a good deal of your life," interrupted Grahame, nodding slowly. "Perhaps more than you'll ever understand. But you needn't fear Carstairs—for to-night, at least. Afterward—well, that depends upon you."

"You mean he'll try to make me marry Eileen?"

"That I don't know," said Grahame heavily. "He says not—not if he can prevent it. He thinks it won't help matters; that for the sake of the world's good opinion Eileen would be saddled with a proved blackguard—those words are his. There is some truth in that argument."

Spencer flushed darkly.

"I suppose the world will consider me a blackguard," he said; "but I didn't elect the rôle. Conditions cornered me. I hope you don't think I knew from the first Lonsdale had no right to perform the ceremony. I guess Carstairs found out and has told you?"

"Yes, and you needn't lie to me," said Grahame wearily. "It's a waste of time. I now understand your elaborate scheming. From the first you'd no intention of renouncing Miss Burr. You considered Eileen your logical victim, and, when put to it, did not hesitate at a bogus marriage rather than give her up. You've had your way all through life, and were determined, at all costs, to have it in this. I blame myself for not knowing you better. When your fortune was gone, your so-called love at an end, you renewed your attentions to Miss Burr——"

"All right. Have it your own way!" said Spencer bitterly, with the air of a martyr. "All the same, I did *not* know

Lonsdale had been expelled from the church. I acted in perfectly good faith, and with the most honorable intention. I had done Lonsdale an injury once, but believed he had forgiven it, as a member of the cloth should. Eileen and I wanted to be married quietly, and naturally I thought of my friend. This was Lonsdale's revenge, and he wrote me later saying the marriage was illegal. It was a fiendish way of paying me back."

"And one that suited you admirably," finished Grahame, with a hard, skeptical laugh. "Why haven't you told Eileen that the ceremony wasn't legal?"

"Well—there was no hurry. I admit I took advantage of Lonsdale's vile trick, for I found I didn't love Eileen as I should. I intended writing her from day to day until Carstairs showed up. He worried me, keeping me jumping from place to place. I wanted to first dispose of him; have him show his hand, and then commit him to jail or an asylum."

"What happened that night at Mrs. Blugsby's? The night you left?"

"Well, I explained matters to Eileen as best I could. I didn't want to tell her about the bogus ceremony. I wanted to break it by degrees, to make her first understand we would be happier if apart. So I—well, I told her I was in love with some one else. I remember we had a long discussion, for she received the information much better than I expected. Really, she acted most sensibly. She said she had known for some time I was unhappy, that something or some one had come between us, that she suspected I was growing tired of her. She added that her sole aim was my happiness, that she would never compel my love. If her love couldn't hold me, she would never demand the law to do so. She would put no obstacle in my path, but would help me to freedom if I really wanted it; if I was satisfied that it, and it alone, would make for my happiness. But she asked if I was sure of my love for this other? Was it not only a passing fancy? She asked would I not go away for a time? That perhaps I was overtired and weary of seeing her

constantly every day. Perhaps I needed a change of scene, a complete rest."

"But," interrupted Grahame, "she made it clear that her love for you had not changed? Offering you your freedom—if you insisted upon it—was not prompted by indifference, but an unselfish love that placed your happiness far above her own?"

"That's true," said Spencer, in a low voice. "And not one woman in a thousand would have acted that way. I've no word to say against Eileen; she was all, and more, a wife should be. Her love was the real thing, but it was thrown away on me. So she asked me to go away for a time, to see as much of this other woman—she never asked her name—as I wanted. And if at the end of two months or so—she didn't pin me down to a definite time—if I reached an irrevocable decision, if I was sure I loved this other and could only be happy with her, well, then she would believe, and not before. She would give me my freedom unasked." Spencer stopped, then added: "So I did not desert her, and that's the only thing I can say for myself. I left with her full knowledge and consent, and if I didn't write it was by mutual agreement, for she insisted that all intimacy be severed during my absence. I was to be a free agent, given an indefinite period in which to learn my own heart. At the end I was to either write that I still wanted my freedom or return to her of my own free will, confirmed in my love for her. This is the truth, and you may believe it."

"I do believe it," said Grahame. "A strange agreement, but one entirely consonant with Eileen's character. She is an idealist, and cares nothing for the material benefits of the marriage state. She wanted your voluntary love or nothing. I wonder, under similar conditions, how many wives who have no children to consider would have the courage and unselfishness to put their husbands to such a test. Perhaps divorces would be fewer." He eyed Spencer, who with clenched hands and bowed head was intently studying the carpet. "And did you confirm your af-

fection for Miss Burr?" he asked. "You found her in every way more desirable than Eileen?"

Spencer's head sank lower.

"You know the attraction there was greatly financial," he said, in a dry voice. "You've said so—and truly. I'm insinuating nothing against Julie—she's worlds too good for me—but—well, she isn't Eileen. I've found that out."

Came a long silence, broken finally by Grahame, who said:

"Yet, after all, there is some judgment in the course Eileen took. Better find out first as last; let the husband have every opportunity of knowing his 'affinity'; let him know her in her true colors; let him compare her with his wife. And now, Spencer, I'll tell you a little story—a story of the woman who waited and watched for the decision that never came. Yes, it's concerning Eileen."

In simple language, without straining for effort, Grahame told of Eileen's long struggle at Mrs. Blugsby's, her illness, removal to the hospital and subsequent blindness, and of his finding her. He made no mention of the deception practiced upon her, engineered by Murgatroyd and himself. During the recital Spencer buried face in hands, and: "Poor girl! Poor little girl!" he murmured more than once.

"And now," finished Grahame, "we finally arrive at the question: What are you going to do about it? What is to become of the woman upon whom you've brought all this? Who has been your innocent victim, whose only fault was loving you, who has suffered so much for your sake?"

"I don't know," groaned Spencer, shaking his head. "Anyway, I can't retrieve the past. It's too late. She knows how I've acted——"

"She does not. She believes you voluntarily returned, confirmed in your love for her. She believes it was *you* who came to her that day in the hospital."

"Eh?" cried Spencer, leaning tensely forward. "What do you mean? You—you can't mean you've been playing



*Eileen was standing in the doorway, bathed in the soft light from the corridor.*

that old trick of the voices, palming yourself off as me——”

“Yes, I’ve been playing the substitute. Eileen is upstairs at the present moment. She’s blind, you understand, and I’ve been passing as you. It was necessary we should be known as husband and wife,” he added, looking fixedly at Spencer. “Mrs. James, a trained nurse, has been in constant attendance upon Eileen. Mrs. James knows I am merely a substitute. So does Doctor Murgatroyd, Eileen’s physician, who coöperated in the deception. I took all these precautions,” he added slowly, “not because I had any doubt of what *you* might think. It was merely to frustrate possible blackmailers and scandalmongers.”

Spencer’s eyes dropped, and the flaming jealousy and suspicion that had

leaped to them slowly flickered out. He had risen, but now sank heavily back in his chair.

“That’s right,” he said, choking on the words. “I’m glad you had at least that conception of me—that I can understand and appreciate honor. No, I could never doubt you. I know what you are.”

Grahame then briefly outlined those causes which had prompted the deception.

“Murgatroyd and I acted as we thought for the best,” he finished. “It was that or Eileen’s life—so we believed. Perhaps it was the decision of two sentimentalists. I don’t know whether we were right or wrong. But you must understand we had no idea it would

have to be continued so long, for I was confident I would find you before Eileen left the hospital. We let the future take care of itself. To-night I had decided to confess everything to Eileen—your arrival obviated that—for to-morrow she has an appointment with an eye specialist, and we’re satisfied her sight will be fully restored. In fact, it has been slowly returning, and perhaps an operation won’t be necessary.”

“You have done all this for Eileen, not me,” said Spencer.

“I have,” said Grahame. “It’s unnecessary to dissemble. You know that I love her, that I have always loved her, that I will always love her. Doctor Murgatroyd, Carstairs, and you know this. I have told it to you three, and you three alone. And this brings me to the alternative I’m going to place be-

fore you; but, first of all, I wish you to bear in mind that Eileen knows nothing of your conduct. She doesn't know about Miss Burr or the bogus marriage. I, as you, have been forgiven the past—such as she knows of it. It is wiped clean, and I—I have tried, in your name, to make up for it. She does not suspect I am merely a substitute. You can step into the position I've been occupying, in name only, without awaking a doubt in her mind. You can start over again, honorably, fairly, and with no thought of the past but to atone for it. You understand?"

"Yes," whispered Spencer. "But—you?"

"I am merely a substitute," said Grahame slowly. "I love Eileen, but she does not love me. This problem," he continued, drawing a great breath, "is almost impossible to solve. I don't know if I am doing—or attempting to do—the right thing. But before God you and Eileen are man and wife, and nothing can alter that truth. I know she loves you, and I *think*, despite your actions, you've found you still love her. That is what I must know, and don't be afraid to speak out. There must be no compulsion; you must not think of Carstairs or of me. Will you voluntarily, willingly right the wrong you have done? If not—I will marry Eileen. That is the alternative. You realize, of course, that I can expect no greater honor or happiness than marriage with her."

"I don't see why you give me this alternative," Spencer blurted out, the words wrung from him. "But—I do love Eileen. I still love her. I have found that out to-night."

Grahame eyed him long and searchingly.

"Remember," he said, "there can be no second chance. This cannot be an experiment. If you again fail, there is Carstairs to deal with—and me. You have no legal or moral claim upon Eileen, and I have as much right—perhaps more—to press my suit."

"I realize that," said Spencer.

"But *she loves you*. That's the point," added Grahame. "I could not

make her happy, but *you can*—and I think you will."

"I will!" said Spencer. "I swear it before God. My life has been a hell since I took advantage of Lonsdale's crime. Let me start over again with a clean slate. You have shown me——"

"Perhaps some of the good that's in us all," said Grahame. "You will then marry Eileen?"

"I will."

"Then it is settled;" and Grahame drew a long breath. "You can make some plausible excuse for having another ceremony; make it a civil one. But we can arrange those details later. You will remain here to-night—in this room, for we must run no risk of Eileen overhearing both our voices. You must shave that beard to-night. I will bring you the materials. To-morrow morning you will meet Eileen. Mrs. James will be present, as is her custom. You will explain to Eileen about having another ceremony performed. I will see to the details at the other end. And you will be married to-morrow in the presence of Murgatroyd and myself—you will say you sent for me. Then you will accompany Eileen to the specialist's; and I resign my position as substitute. Of course, you cannot return here. You must rent a furnished apartment in town for the time being. I will see to that. You may draw upon me until once more firmly reestablished in your profession. I will help you in every way possible to the extent of my ability."

"You are more than kind," said Spencer, very white and haggard. "And what about Carstairs?"

"He will consent to the marriage when satisfied it's for Eileen's happiness; satisfied you love her, that you are not being coerced or intimidated; satisfied you, and you alone, are capable of making her happy, worthy of being now trusted with her future. Leave Carstairs to me. He will see it is the only way. And it *is* the only way," he added fiercely, as if striving to convince himself.

"Yes," said Spencer, "it's the only way. And I agree with you about my

not daring to go upstairs. This room will do very well for the night. I can sleep on the couch. Don't trouble yourself about me."

"I will see that the servants are kept in ignorance," said Grahame.

The two sat up another hour discussing every detail of the morrow's campaign; and it was long after midnight when Grahame finally left.

Alone, Spencer locked the door, and turned off every light but that of the small, green-shaded desk lamp; and this he carefully inclosed on three sides with a large chessboard which a canvass of the room unearthed. The drawing-room was now virtually in darkness, save where the radius of the light concentrated on the desk.

Spencer smoked for half an hour, and then, satisfied every other inmate of the house was asleep, he seated himself at the desk, and slowly wrote the following letter:

DEAR JACK: You have just left, and I am writing this in your drawing-room. I mention these facts that you may know when the letter was written, for when you receive it I will be far away from here. I elect to write it now in quietness and peace, with the memory of all that has happened strong upon me. Postponement would only bring lack of inclination, for I know myself too well.

To begin, I have no intention of marrying Eileen; I cannot if I would, for I am pledged—and irrevocably so—elsewhere. But I could not very well refuse your offer. I saw murder in your eyes once this night, and did not care to rekindle it. To my surprise—you and I have been rather ignorant of each other's true character, by the way—I found you a man of violent passions, and I dared not push you too far. It was idle to say there was no compulsion in the matter when, had I refused, both you and Carstairs would have had my life. This I know. So I dissembled, knowing I could slip away to-night. That is why I found no fault with this room.

I came here to-night knowing Miss Burr had called upon you, knowing you were ignorant of my bogus ceremony with Eileen; but I wished to break as gently as possible the news of the latter, and so dissembled again. I adroitly led you to discover the unhappy truth for yourself.

The fact is that Miss Burr and I will be married when you receive this. When I saw her the other day she naturally told me of her visit to you, but I finally convinced her of the truth—and proved the same—that

Eileen has no legal claim upon me; that I had the right, and was sincere, in my attentions to her, Julie. I pleaded guilty to the "affair" in question, but Miss Burr is sensible, and my strongest advocate is the love she bears me. She has forgiven me, and has consented to marry me early to-morrow morning. I have already secured the license, and made the necessary arrangements for a very quiet, informal wedding.

You now understand why I cannot leave this letter here; though you could not legally stop the ceremony, you might make an unpleasant disturbance. You might justly consider me no fit husband for Julie, and deem it your duty to explain about the bogus ceremony with Eileen. You see I am perfectly frank, and admit Julie is entirely ignorant of Mr. Lonsdale's unfortunate felony. And I here take the opportunity of repeating that I was ignorant of the latter's expulsion from the ministry.

Julie insisted that before our marriage I would see you and explain away your delusion—I mean your believing me married to Eileen. Knowing your severe moral attitude, she has come to understand why you naturally construed my "affair" into the binding ties of matrimony. I preferred writing you about it, but Julie insisted upon my seeing you in person, and so this explains my visit to you.

Julie and I are going abroad for an indefinite stay; perhaps forever. I hope your good influence upon Carstairs will be permanent, but I think it wisest to place myself beyond his reach for the time being, at any rate.

Of course you may tell Julie—or, failing that, her parents—of the bogus ceremony. You may even show this letter. I have considered these possibilities, and, knowing your nobility and common sense, have dismissed them. As it will be much too late to prevent our marriage, why make Julie unhappy? Why not make the best of it? You are an old friend who has her welfare at heart. And why should I suffer for Lonsdale's felony? He was the culprit, Eileen and I the innocent and unhappy victims. It was a tragedy that might happen to any one. I know you will have the justice to admit this, and so I fear nothing from you.

Your attitude to-night touched me exceedingly. I know what your renunciation of Eileen meant to you. You are much too good and—may I add it without contempt?—stupid for everyday wear. You should have suspected long, long ago that Eileen had no legal claim upon me. Perhaps it was not stupidity, but a sublime and touching faith in me—your brother.

I need say nothing about Eileen. She is so far above me that I cannot understand or appreciate her. And then I must marry money. I am not a genius like you.

I hope you will be sensible, and confess your deception to Eileen. Doctor Murga-

troyd must be a visionary, mystic, and idealist like yourself. I cannot believe your deception the contrivance of flesh-and-blood people, nor can I conceive a clever woman long hoodwinked by it. Nobly conceived, however, and nobly executed! Would that I were worthy of it!

There is something lacking in me—soul, perhaps, like they said of my portraits. A man without a soul is worse than a man without a country. Perhaps my soul is merely undeveloped. From the cradle, as you know, I have been taught to think solely of myself. I've taken the line of least resistance—and everything else worth while—and am taking it now. There's no substance to me; I'm external, superficial, effervescent like mother was. A worthy or noble action can stir the roots of my being, but its influence is transitory. My good impulses never last, never resist the first pleadings of self-interest. That is why I can be sincere solely in selfishness.

I'm attempting to define my character so far as I understand it; attempting to plead that I'm not a scoundrel through design, viciousness, forethought, or predilection—for I admit that taking advantage of Lonsdale's felony is the action of a scoundrel. Yet I hope, and will earnestly try, to make a good husband to Julie, for she is infatuated with me, as you may have guessed. The leopard can not change his spots or the Ethiopian his skin, yet if conditions don't corner me again—and this time lack of money, at least, won't be one of them—I may develop some of your principle and stamina. I am really doing the best for Eileen, though I admit this thought is not actuating me. I would only make her miserable for the rest of her life, and she cannot have known you all this time—even though but casually—without discovering the vast difference between you and me. I earnestly wish for your mutual happiness.

I ask you not to think too harshly of my shortcomings, both inherited, acquired, and cultivated, and I will let you know if the leopard should happen to change his spots. In the meantime, dear Jack, I am,

Yours with much affection, SPENCER.

## CHAPTER XII.

Grahame, the elder, did not retire that night, nor did he even make a pretense of so doing. His mental state was not precisely that of one who can go to bed with the deliberate intention of sleeping peacefully, conscious of a day's work well done, a temporary oblivion well earned. His mind was not peaceful, nor was his soul at rest.

Waiting for him in the library he had found the faithful Mrs. James, who ex-

plained she had had some trouble in persuading Eileen to retire, even when convinced that he, Grahame, would not be able to see her again that night. The nurse had seen her charge safely asleep, and had then stolen back to the library, conscious that the crisis had arrived, realizing to the full the gravity of Spencer's visit, and that Grahame would need her.

In the library they held a long, whispered consultation, Grahame briefly narrating all that had happened and his plans for the morrow. Early in the morning she was to dismiss the two servants, giving them an extra month's wages. Spencer must not be seen until they had gone. He knew of this, and would remain in the locked drawing-room.

Alone in his room, Grahame smoked hard, and with weary reiteration went over every detail of the morrow's strenuous campaign. He had planned it all to a nicety, and had discounted every possible accident. This was his last night as substitute; but he did not permit his thoughts to dwell upon himself.

Grahame had not removed even his coat. He was sitting in an armchair. He had no intention of falling asleep; that was farthest from his thoughts. He believed it impossible. Yet presently his musings became confused and fantastic. He made a fugitive effort at rousing himself, then dropped asleep, the pipe still hanging in his mouth.

There came a time when a gentle and persistent iteration of the name "Spencer" merged with his dreaming; became insistent, compelling; and, after a futile effort at dismissal, he protestingly struggled to wakefulness.

Eileen was standing in the doorway, bathed in the soft light from the corridor. She was dressed in the simple morning gown she had worn that day. She made no attempt to enter the room. These two facts, to Grahame, were significant in themselves. The grandfather clock in the lower hall boomed out the hour of two, and he realized he had been sleeping less than twenty minutes.

Befogged with sleep, through which astonishment and perturbation were



seeking to penetrate, he arose and walked to where she stood. She did not wait for him to speak, but said:

"I must have a talk with you. Will you come to the library? Don't awaken Mrs. James."

She spoke passively, yet with a certain imperativeness and repressed emotion not lost upon him.

"Can't you wait until morning?" he asked, though realizing the futility of the question. "Do you know what time it is?"

"I do," she said. "I waited until Mrs. James was asleep. She has been up late. There is no use putting me off. I must have a talk with you before morning. It is useless to ask me to sleep. I—I overheard something that was said in the drawing-room."

Grahame stood speechless. He could find nothing to say. There *was* nothing to say.

"Will you come?" she asked at length, in the same quiet, impersonal voice.

"Yes," said Grahame, swallowing hard.

"Thank you. You are kind."

They walked through the silent corridors to the library so quietly that no echo was aroused. Once, instinctively, he put forth a guiding hand, and whispered: "It is dark. Be careful of that step."

"You forget light and darkness are one to me," she said, in the same hushed voice.

She did not take his hand. They conversed as strangers. The old intimacy had vanished. He wondered that this should be, without some verbal acknowledgment of its going, yet sensed the futility of protest.

He lighted the green-shaded reading lamp—for his benefit, not hers—and closed the library door. She did not seek refuge in a chair, but faced him squarely, flat-footed, as if braced to meet the impact of a sensate adversary. She was very white and worn.

"And now," she said at length, in a hushed voice, "will you tell me to whom I am speaking? Are you my husband or brother-in-law? Are you Spencer or Jack? Please do not equivocate. It is

useless. I must have the truth. I know you will be kind."

"I am Jack," said Grahame.

"I thought so," said Eileen, without a tremor, but holding herself quite rigid. "I wished to be sure. I didn't know if Spencer was occupying your room. You are Jack, and you have been posing as Spencer all these months. It never was Spencer, but always you."

It was neither query, accusation, nor denunciation, but an impersonal statement of the truth.

"That is true," said Grahame, as impersonally. "It has never been Spencer. I was the substitute. May I ask how you discovered this? What you overheard in the drawing-room? I ask it as a favor."

"I will tell you," she said slowly, raising her head as if to fairly meet his eyes. "In one way, this has not been a great shock to me. I suspected it some time ago. I mentioned it to you that day in the studio. Your blunder concerning the Boston commission also set me thinking. Of course, it was but suspicion. I could not believe—I dared not. It—it was too awful!"

"I understand," said Grahame stolidly.

"And one has some intuition," pursued Eileen, in the same grave, impersonal voice. "Spencer and I were not together long. We were separated six months or more. I was blind. I could not see. Your voice and his are alike—but I *felt* you were not Spencer. Yet I had no proof. Your actions, your mannerisms were not his—not those I had known. Of course, you had been away a long time, and I had been very ill. I took that into account."

"I understand," repeated Grahame.

"On the whole, I didn't know what to believe," pursued Eileen, touching a handkerchief to parched lips. "Your ardent wish to have my eyesight restored argued you had nothing to conceal. I could have set many a trap for you regarding incidents known solely to Spencer and me. I could have done this, yet I did not *dare*. I could have found out the truth by this method, but I was afraid. I was afraid to learn the



*They did not stir as Grahame approached.*

truth, afraid to test my suspicions. I was a coward."

She paused, touching the handkerchief to her lips.

"Yes," said Grahame. "You were afraid to find it a fool's paradise."

"Yes," said Eileen. "A fool's paradise—but a paradise. To-night," she added quickly, "when Mrs. James announced a Mr. Brown, I knew she was not telling the truth. I knew a visitor had arrived whom, at all hazards, I was not to see. I *knew* that somehow a crisis had come in my life—identified with this visitor.

"I determined to outwit Mrs. James. I pretended to be asleep, and at length

saw her slip out of the room. I heard her reënter this library. She did not close the door.

"I dressed and crept into the corridor. I dared not pass this door, so I leaned over the balustrade, for I could hear voices in the drawing-room. At first nothing was distinguishable; but at length they became louder, more distinct—and both voices were alike. Finally I heard one exclaim: 'Now, look out, Spencer! I want peace, not war. There's a side to me you don't know. I don't wish you to know it if I can humanly help it. If you'll so far insult your wife—'

"At that Mrs. James came into the

corridor, and I slipped back into the bedroom. I crept into bed, but did not undress. That is all I overheard; but I was now sure that Spencer was in the drawing-room—Spencer and you, for none but you could have a voice like his. And I *knew* it was Spencer, the visitor. I knew it as truly as if I had witnessed your meeting."

Grahame slowly drew a breath of supreme relief. She then had not learned the worst, and now she would never learn it.

"I understand," Eileen continued, "why you have done this thing, why you took advantage of my blindness. It was for the honor of the family. You thought it your duty. I have heard Doctor Murgatroyd say I would never have recovered had not my husband imbued me with the desire to live; so you offered yourself as a sacrifice upon the altar of duty. You found me—as you thought—a deserted wife—"

"You flatter me," said Grahame harshly. "Might it not occur to you that I took base advantage of your blindness? That Murgatroyd believes me to be Spencer Grahame?"

"Stop!" she said. "I *know* you. I—I have come to know you very well." She smiled bravely. "I see it all now. Doctor Murgatroyd and you are foolish sentimentalists. I say you did this thing for the honor of the family. You did it to save my life. It was the action of one who owned a distorted sense of duty, a chivalry sadly out of date."

"I would have done the same for a stranger," said Grahame, "had I believed it would save a life. Any one would."

"Any one would not—but I understand," she said. "I—I wanted to have this talk with you, to let you know I was now fully aware of all you've done for me. I could not let you slip away, to discard your rôle of substitute, thinking me ignorant and unthankful. I could not do that. I *had* to tell you how I appreciate it all. I like to think of the way you've acted throughout, even though it was in the name of duty—quixotic duty. I will think of it always."

"You are very kind," said Grahame, with bowed head. "Very forgiving. It was a mean deception. I can only say that Murgatroyd and I acted as we thought for the best. I do not say we were right. I did think you a deserted wife, but Spencer has told me of the strange agreement entered into by you and him. He wasn't aware of your illness. He thought you had returned to Sharon as you promised, and he has been hunting for you high and low. That is why he did not come to you before this. For he has found you were right, and he wrong. He has learned his lesson, and asks nothing but a chance to atone for the past. It is not my place to speak for him; but, now that you suspect, I may as well confirm your happiness."

"Yes, my happiness," said Eileen, turning away and leaning against the mantelpiece. "I did not go to Sharon because it was none of Sharon's business. Our sorrows are our own. Where is Spencer?"

"Sleeping in the drawing-room. It was so late—and there are the servants to consider. You understand why Mrs. James gave the name of Brown? You see, we didn't know of the agreement; we didn't know why Spencer had come here, or if we could hold him. We didn't wish to arouse any false hopes."

"But you could not continue the deception indefinitely," she said, with bowed head. "You realized that?"

"Of course. Yet Murgatroyd and I lived from day to day in the hope Spencer would return."

"And—if he had never returned?"

"I was going to confess to-night," said Grahame. "That is why I asked you to wait for me. When your eyesight was restored confession would be forestalled, and I preferred telling you. Yes, I realized the deception could not last. In fact, I did not think it would last beyond the hospital."

"Yes, it must have been a great sacrifice," she said, nodding slowly. "The renunciation of everything worth while. I thank you again—yet I wish you had told me before I had left the hospital. I could have borne the truth."

"Had I known about the agreement it would have been different," said Grahame. "Yet," he added cheerfully, "things have turned out far better than I dared hope. We've had a happy ending, after all."

"Yes, a happy ending," she said.

"And I have come to know and appreciate my sister, Eileen."

"And I, my brother," she said. "Perhaps," she added, "you may remember once asking me a hypothetical question relative to this matter. It was that day in the studio. Were you trying to break the truth to me then?"

"I was."

"But, of course, you distorted it beyond recognition," she said slowly after a moment's silence. "For you said—you said he loved this woman. You said the substitute was not actuated by a sense of duty. You said he loved this woman. Of course, you distorted it beyond recognition, so that I wouldn't suspect."

Grahame struggled for speech, but found no words.

"And now a hypothetical question has occurred to me," pursued Eileen. "Let us continue with your fictional couple. Supposing the husband returned. And supposing the wife found she no longer loved him. Had *never* loved him? Had never known until too late the meaning of love? Supposing, no longer deceived through the sense of sight, no longer betrayed by externals, broadened and made more perceptive by sorrow and suffering, she had, in the meantime, found—found in another all those qualities she thought she saw in her husband. Would she be justified in seeking her freedom?"

"Eileen! You can't mean you no longer love Spencer!"

She whirled upon him, white-faced and passionate.

"I can, and I do!" she cried. "And marriage without love is a lie! Yes, *this* is the 'happy' ending! Mine the 'happy' knowledge to the grave that Spencer has returned too late! There! I have said it!"

She turned away, and as quickly faced him again, balling her handker-

chief in tense fingers. "I did not mean to say this, and you will forget it," she whispered. "I don't know what I said. I have only myself to blame, for I, who so confidently put Spencer to the test, have found that I am the one who has ingloriously failed. I made that agreement, and will keep it to the letter, to the end. 'To have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy ordinance!'"

And as she uttered these words, a pistol shot suddenly crashed out, defiling the stillness of the night.

Eileen gave a low cry, and whirled about, putting her hands quickly to blanched cheeks.

"Eileen! You will remain here!" cried Grahame, springing to the door. "Promise me you will not leave this room."

"I will not leave this room," she repeated mechanically. "Go if you must. Do not think of me."

As he stumbled down the stairs, Grahame's thoughts drew a horrible picture of Carstairs. The shot had come from the front of the house, from the veranda.

Grahame threw open the hall door and switched on the porch lights. A French window of the drawing-room stood wide open, and a torn lace curtain fluttered in the night air. Before this window, on the veranda, lay sprawled a huddled something—two men fast locked in a clinch. They did not stir as Grahame approached. A burlap bag was at their side.

One was Spencer Grahame shot through the head; the other, Adolphus Hock. Spencer's fingers were locked in the other's throat, and it was evident that, true to his cardinal rule, Hock had not accepted a murder risk until his own life, in all truth, was at its last gasp. Both men were dead.

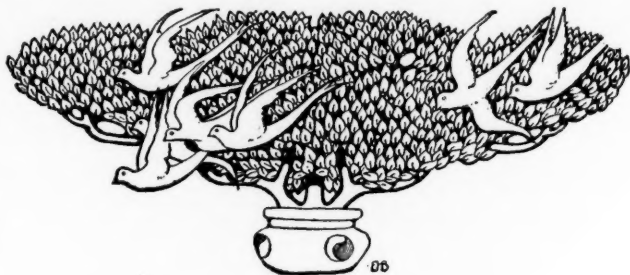
Grahame noted the burlap bag and kit of burglar's tools, noted the open window, the fact that Spencer was top-coated and gloved, that his hat lay a few feet distant.

These two, sometime sharers of the same rooming house, had met on the dark veranda; one leaving via the window, the other planning to enter that same window; both moving with infinite caution, mutually ignorant of the other's proximity. Spencer had taken Hock for Carstairs; Hock had taken Spencer for Grahame. Cowards both, and conscious of evil done, they had fought for their lives; fought instantly with the fury of fear.

Grahame's mind blanked this line of reasoning as he reverently lifted Spencer and carried him into the drawing-room. It was not until later, when he found the addressed letter in Spencer's pocket, that he accepted and

forgave the bitter truth that the leopard, down to the last, had been true to his spots.

They will tell you—those who did not know Mrs. John Grahame when she was blind—that she is a woman of infinite sympathy and charity, whose love for "all things both great and small" is manifested in many ways. They will tell you—and there are those who say it is stretching wifely sentiment and affection to the breaking point—that she even visits the grave of her husband's half brother, an individual whom in all likelihood she never knew, for he died, they say, very suddenly, long prior to her marriage.



### Unsatisfied

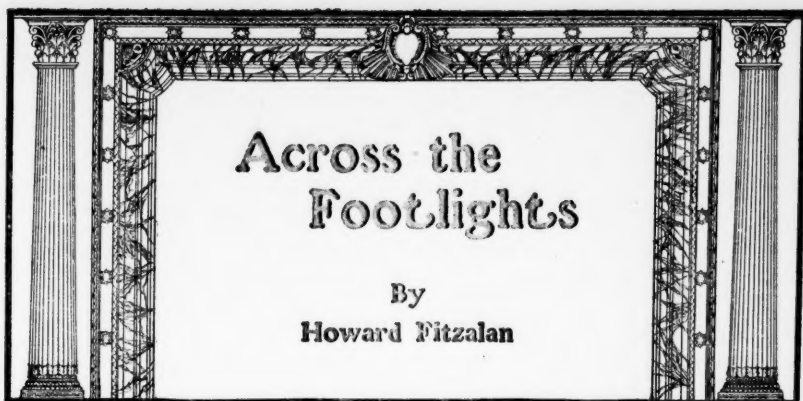
OH, with some wizard brush, to hold the dawntime!  
 Its trembling glow beyond the wall of night,  
 Opal and gold sweeping on seas of shadow,  
 Dim hills unveiled where kindling mists take flight.

In new words—gems distilled—to paint the twilight;  
 The dolphin death of sunset fires that glow;  
 Then fold me round with purpling, dream-weft mantle,  
 From voiceless longings—deeps of joy none know.

To learn the music that morning stars sang;  
 To grasp the vision, and hold fast the dream;  
 To store in treasure house for day of darkness  
 The golden sunbars from the running stream.

To live! To live! Not in my years' brief number,  
 But to enshrine for Time's enduring space  
 One dream divine—then go, content to slumber,  
 One deathless thing of beauty in my place.

CORA D. FENTON.



# Across the Footlights

By  
Howard Fitzalan

IT is seldom a man starts on a business project with the avowed statement that he does not wish to make money; yet, almost, this is what Mr. Winthrop Ames said. He wishes to benefit.

"There are in New York," Mr. Ames argues, "counting visitors, a class of people sufficient to support a small theater at which plays will be given, not because they will appeal to the prejudices and passions of the public in general, but because they are good plays. I will give those people such plays; I will surround those people, while they are in my theater, with a harmonious background, such as is to be found in the drawing-rooms of the best of them. And, so that my actors and actresses will not be discouraged by empty seats, I will dispense with balcony and gallery."

All the sensations of being in one of Mrs. Astor's great entertainment rooms come while sitting in The Little Theater, with its tapestried walls, its cunningly contrived candelabra, its reception hall just below, with its shaded lights and perfectly groomed attendants—attendants who hand around tea in the afternoons and coffee at nights, at no expense to the theater patrons, for, having once procured a ticket, Mr. Ames wants his audiences to consider

themselves his guests. It is not even necessary to bring your own cigarettes.

And then you are given Galsworthy's gentle commentary on follies and fads, "The Pigeon," with its well-meaning giver of indiscriminate alms, who invites to his house three human derelicts one snowy Christmas Eve. To one he gives up his bedroom, to another his trousers, to a third his studio. Social reformers enter on the following day, and tell poor *Wellwyn* that his charity is ill bestowed; to the unfortunates he succored the reformers apply mechanical laws of reform, with the consequence that all the unfortunates return to their vagabond existence, and every one of the three attempts suicide. They are saved from death only by poor *Wellwyn*, whom the world calls a "Pigeon"—ready for any one's plucking—but who alone understands the hearts of wild things, who alone knows that there may be ambition without ability to realize it, desire for adventure without the means to gratify it; who realizes that to love the hedgerows, the singing larks o' mornings, and the meadows in dew, make for the artistic temperament in the man with money, the vagabond in those without it.

"The Pigeon—yes, that's what they call him," one of the characters is heard to say, as he picks up *Wellwyn's* de-



canter. "But I wouldn't have touched a drop of this if he hadn't given me leave."

*Wellwyn* is no "Pigeon." He is only the wealthy vagabond helping his poor brothers, helping them because soul cries to soul, because they have shared in the pink joy of early morn, the crimson happiness of early night; because in both the song of the Romanies is a national anthem, and the rain beating in the face brings only the delight of wild, undisciplined freedom.

"Some one must help people like us—some one who understands," says the tramp philosopher to *Wellwyn*, "and you understand. You cannot keep yourself from helping such as we, because you do understand."

So the curtain falls on the final act, the audience knows that *Wellwyn*, to the end of his days, will be giving away trousers, and taking a shamefaced delight in being able to do so. A very human sort of play, "The Pigeon," with poetry in its conception and execution.

#### "THE FLOWER OF THE PALACE OF HAN."

It is admittedly comic to an American if some provincial Englishman asks him if the Indians occasionally invade the streets of Chicago to scalp the dwellers along Michigan Boulevard; or if a Frenchman, whose ideas of *vie de l'Amérique* are gained from glancing at highly colored half-dime novels, inquires if one runs any danger from grizzly bears in the Bois De Parque Centrale, New York. Yet that self-same superior American refers casually to the Chinese as uncivilized, and wants to know whether the American missionaries and traders have succeeded in educating them. It is somewhat of a shock to this type of American to read, on the matinée program of The Little Theater, that "The Flower of the Palace of Han" was written and produced by the Chinese in the year 1285 A. D.

The play tells a coherent story in five scenes, a story teeming with psychology. A weakling emperor has a prime minister who sees a beautiful girl and orders

her sent to be the emperor's wife. After she has been installed in one of the more distant pavilions of the emperor's palace, the prime minister has a false portrait made of her, which disgusts the emperor. He orders her kept at a distance. The old prime minister covets her for his own, but one night the emperor hears the sound of a lute, and, following it, sees a lonely and most winsome lady. He loves her immediately for her beauty, her intelligence, and her poetry. He orders the deceiving prime minister beheaded.

The prime minister escapes, and hurries into the country of the great and warlike khan of Tartary. Him he shows, for revenge, a real painting of the beautiful girl, who has now become the emperor's wife. The khan puts him to death for his treachery, but is so smitten with love at sight of the picture that he declares war on the emperor of China, marching on with his Tartar hordes against Peking. Meanwhile, the emperor has been so absorbed with love of his new-found beauty that he neglects to defend his country, and the Tartars march almost under his walls. They send emissaries demanding the girl as the price of peace; if she is not delivered Peking will be razed to the ground. The emperor says he cares nothing for his country, all for the woman; let them do what they can. But the girl, moved by love of China, slips away, and gives herself up to the invaders; but, as soon as they withdraw their armies, commits suicide sooner than be untrue to the man she loves.

The emperor gets knowledge of this by some telepathic source, and is about to renounce the crown of his ancestors, when the spirit of his dead wife comes to him, telling him he must rule the country wisely, and that she will sit by his side in the spirit and be with him through eternity; and, through her influence, the weakling becomes a great emperor.

The play is founded on a legend still widely current in China, the girl *Whar Mou Lan*, being the Chinese Joan of Arc. As for the play itself, it compares favorably with the works of the

minor Elizabethan dramatists, yet was written three hundred years before their time. And so far as its treatment of things spiritual is concerned, it is almost modern.

In staging this play, one scene is treated after the Max Reinhardt manner, with drapings and subdued and sullen lights—the scene of the war tent of the khan of Tartary, where, in the dull glow of torches, the sheep-skinned warriors sprawl out the civilized and delicate prime minister, and prod him to death with their pikes—an artistic and horrific touch.

It is a novelty, such a play; no doubt the public that cares for such things is small, but, then, it is to be seen for but two performances weekly—matinées. It is followed by "The Terrible Meek," a play touching so much upon things divine as to render cursory consideration of it impossible. Even though it is a play of but one act, there are more gloom, terror, and misgiving in it than in one of ordinary length. Viewed rightly, "The Terribly Meek" impresses upon a thinking audience the real lesson of the crucifixion.

#### "THE TYPHOON."

At the outset, no one believed it was possible to "put over," as actors say, a play that had to do with certain intimate relations between a Japanese and a white woman. The present reviewer witnessed "The Typhoon" when it was acted in German, and added his dictum to that of other wisacres. Yet, when Walker Whiteside brought the Americanized version of this Hungarian play to the Fulton Theater it had some success. Undoubtedly, for two acts and three-quarters, it is a gripping, human fragment.

Since "Man and Superman," we have had much of the man who creates love in woman by perfect indifference. So the girl in this play is won. At the time *Tokeramo*, the Japanese, is about to cast her off because she interferes with his work, she loves him devotedly. But when he shows weakness, and tells her he will hold to her though his country

split in twain thereby, when she has actually won his love to so great an extent that he forgets honor and patriotism, she despises him, and taunts him with being yellow, unclean. In his madness, he strangles her.

But *Tokeramo* is too important to Japan to be sent away to long imprisonment. There is a consultation held among the Japanese officials living in Berlin, where *Tokeramo* is doing certain work for his government, and it is decided among them that some minor person shall confess to the murder and take the punishment, for love of Nippon, so that *Tokeramo* may finish the great work so necessary to his country's welfare.

It is here that the spirit of Japan is shown—all for country—the spirit which other nations lack, and which is steadily bringing the little island empire forward to preëminence, until it casts a gigantic shadow over the future of the white nations. So one of the characters in the play is made to say.

After the self-sacrifice of the other man, there is really little to "The Typhoon." *Tokeramo* finishes his great work, and dies of a stage broken heart. But, since the work is done, his compatriots express little concern. He has helped further Nippon; his life has meant something, therefore. Probably had he lived his life would have meant nothing further to Japan. It does not matter whether he lives or dies.

As a study of temperament, "The Typhoon" has value. As it was written by the Hungarian, Melchior Lengyel, and as it was played at the Irving Place Theater; it had little chance of pleasing American audiences. But there is in the land a person named Byron Ongley, an unlucky person, who had conceived and helped to execute many great successes, but who, for lack of something, has gained little for himself. It was he who collaborated on "Brewster's Millions," who was responsible, it is said, for the first drafts of "Get-rich-quick Wallingford" and "The Fortune Hunter"; it was he who wrote several other plays—none successes. Having seen "The Typhoon" in German, this

reviewer knows that into the Englished version Mr. Ongley put most of that which will gain for it any success it may have.

"The Typhoon" served to exploit the art of one Walker Whiteside, a provincial actor, who should have been better known on Broadway heretofore, but who, save for Zangwill's "Melting Pot," in which he played the hero some years ago, has seldom been seen in New York. His *Tokeramo* was conceived and executed in a manner truly Oriental. He is an artist.

### OTHER PLAYS.

In "Baron Trenck," Mr. F. C. Whitney hoped to have a successor to "The Chocolate Soldier," and, no doubt, throughout the country there will be found audiences of a sufficiently discriminating taste to appreciate this, one of the nearest approaches to real opera comique that has been seen in America for long—a romantic drama set to music by Felix Albini, composer of "Madam Troubadour," and telling the story of that historical scamp, Trenck, and his courtship of the fair incognita, it pleases ear and eye, and its libretto does not insult the intelligence.

Another romantic play—a revival of the dramatization of Booth Tarkington's short story, "Monsieur Beaucaire," the same version with which the late Richard Mansfield made us familiar, was done by Lewis Waller recently—done in a manner so charming that New Yorkers have accorded to Waller the same meed of praise Londoners gave him, years back, for this same performance. Of all the artificial tales of an artificial age—the age of powdered wigs, affected manners, and Dresden-doll dressing—this stands the test of time better than any; and the art of Waller, while stagy to an extreme, is precisely what this sort of play needs.

New York will never want for summer amusements again! The Winter Garden has become an institution, and there is to be a Moulin Rouge, also, run upon the lines that made the garden famous.

Ever since the old days of Koster & Bial's, American managers have endeavored to transplant "The Spirit of the Boulevards," and domicile her on American shores. Very recently it was felt that she had been captured successfully, and great efforts were made to house her so magnificently that she would never wish to leave. Hence the Folies Bergère, a brief but glorious thing—a house of mellow lights and mellow wines, of dazzling spectacles and epicurean cookery.

But the Spirit of the Boulevards felt unrestful. All this was too expensive, too exclusive. She is akin to Dickens' Christmas Spirit, who sprinkled poor men's Christmas dinners with his torch. In her beloved Paris, when she sat on the crystal chandelier and saw Jacques Bonhomme and his little sweetheart, the milliner of the Rue Vivienne, chuckling contentedly in the one-franc seats in the far reaches of the balcony; saw François and Jean, the impecunious Boulevard Raspail artists, either lounging about the two-franc *promenoir* or observing the performance from a table on which stood two Pilseners at forty centimes each, that must last them the evening.

Naturally this good Spirit would have been slighted if she did not see Monsieur le Baron "Jim-mee Rotscheeld" and "Pierrette" in one of the *loges*, and across from them one of the La Montaigne boys, and down by the stage "Mistaire Bil-lee Dodsworth" and his American friends; but she wanted her Jacques, her Jean, and her François, too; and at the New York Folies Bergère there was room only for the Rothschilds, the Pierrettes, the La Montaignes, and the Dodsworths; it was too small and too expensive to hold others.

So the Spirit of the Boulevards flew away, and we heard no more of her for some little while; some rumor came to us of a Maxim's and a Chat Noir in London, but those who went to investigate reported conclusively that the Spirit was in neither of these two. And then, all of a sudden, it dawned on Manhattan that she had decided to train

a troupe of her own to fit a home that had been prepared for her.

It was a large home, with plenty of room for the Spirit's poor friends, taking up all of a metropolitan square block, with long, wide stretches of turkey-red carpet, and a velvet-colored, horseshoe-shaped bench along its rear, where the promenaders, or "general admittancers," might sit when they so desired; a splendid red-and-gold palm room above, where one might lounge between acts; smoking permitted, and many, many clever musical-comedy folk at work on the stage.

The Spirit watched the curtain rise with a tremulous heart, but at sight of the filmy draperies, the gray-golds fading into pinks of the settings, the combinations of colors in the costumes, the masterly handling of color notes, as though they were notes in music, the Spirit settled comfortably and butterflylike on the Winter Garden's chandelier.

She saw a man in an impeccable dress coat sit down to a piano, and talk to it until it fairly talked to the audience; and she heard whispers arising back in the *promenoir* from the writers and actors, the managers and press men, that here was the genius of the Garden—one Ellis—Melville of that ilk—who chose the colors and designed the costumes, who taught the chorus men how to tie their dress ties, and sent them to the proper tailors; who put a rose in a girl's hair to take the place in her color scheme of a pink ribbon lost from her costume, and who believed his piano had a soul.

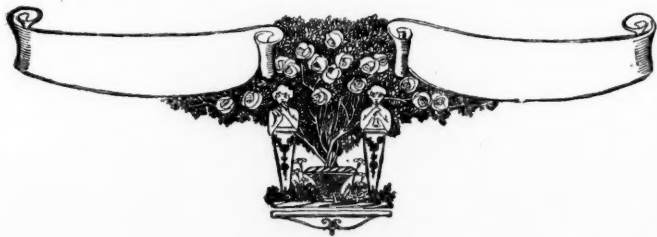
So when other people came on and did things that the Spirit knew were

not of the boulevards, but of the alleys, she left her chandelier—she was not ready to make her seat permanent there—and she flitted down and talked to Master Ellis, who talked to the younger Shubert, and a magician's wand was waved over the Garden.

Gaby Deslys came from Paris with her pearls and her magnetism; the tin-pan tunes were banished for those of a young musician named Hirsch, fresh from a German conservatory, yet not too proud to find a kinship between ragtime and Hungarian syncopation; librettists were asked to refrain from rewriting old jokes, and producers were requested not to have the chorus do exactly what the audience expected it to do.

A black-face "comic" was turned loose without lines whenever the higher-class effects seemed on the point of boring; after his low comedy would come a pantomime of beautiful women, worthy of the London Alhambra, or the Paris Olympia; and variety, always variety, was made the slogan, so that the jaded cosmopolite might drop in at any time, and find something in the performance that was not there the week before. And as soon as the audiences showed signs of having too much of the show another shimmering spectacle was substituted, another fresh batch of European favorites brought over.

And then the Spirit of the Boulevards knew that she might safely take to the chandelier and be happy. It is even believed she whispered to a sister spirit to come over and guide the hand of F. Ziegfeld, Junior, in his Moulin Rouge venture. So that, verily, there is to be a merry summer!





## What the Editor Has to Say

WE are accustomed to believe that we know our neighbors fairly well, and our families and intimates even better. In reality, we are all mysteries, not only to our friends, but to ourselves. A woman may speak of knowing another woman "as well as she knows her own mother." If she stops to think, she will realize that she doesn't know her own mother particularly well. During the first ten years of her life, her mother may have known *her*, but always the biggest part of the mother's life and experience will be a closed book.

AND to ourselves, if we give it thought, we are even more unaccountable. To every one, of course, is given a conscious mind. We understand its processes, and if we care to we can guide them. We can determine what this part of the mind is to think about, and by the exercise of a little will power make it do what we want to. There is another, vaguer—perhaps bigger—subconscious side to every one. It is this subconscious mind that acts for us in times of sudden emergency without any direction from the will at all, before, indeed, what we know as the will has time to act. If you saw a child in imminent danger of being run over by an automobile, would you scream and faint, or would you snatch the child out of harm's way? You don't know. If you had time to think, you know what you would do; but if you didn't have time to think? Have you never been surprised at your own courage and presence of mind in

sudden danger? Many women have, and have done things of which they believed themselves incapable, and which they could not explain afterward. It is never safe to generalize, but we think that most men believe themselves to be braver than they actually are, and most women more cowardly.

YOU have often heard some one say: "If my husband acted that way, I'd never speak to him again." She undoubtedly means it when she says it, and believes what she says; but, as a matter of fact, she doesn't know at all what she would do under a set of circumstances she has never been called upon to face before. The hero in the complete novel by Kathryn Jarboe, which will open the next issue of SMITH'S, was in Boston, and fully intended leaving for Europe the next day. All his preparations had been made, but instead of going abroad, as he expected to and as common sense advised, he went instead to a little New England town—his mother's childhood home—and where he really had no business calling him at all. He was a lawyer, and, as a rule, lawyers are hard-headed and practical enough. The circumstance that made him impracticable and apparently foolish was nothing more than a stray whiff of the perfume of a white lilac bush. It turned out later on that he did a wise thing in giving up his European trip, but at the time it looked like nothing so much as a wild attack of insanity. This is only one of the many things that go to make the novel,

"The Weakest Link," unusually interesting and out of the common. It is a dramatic story of a murder mystery, interesting for the plot alone, but filled with a charm and color that give it distinction. You will get it complete in the next issue of SMITH'S.

TIME was, not so very long ago, when a woman who ran away from her husband could be apprehended and dragged back home, virtually a prisoner. The fact that runaway wives are not treated in that fashion at present is not altogether due to the advocates of woman suffrage. It arises from the fact that both men and women are growing to have a larger spirit of tolerance for others, that we have higher ideas than formerly of the value of personal liberty, and that we realize more than formerly that we can't make people like things, or even do them to any great extent, by main force. Still, when a girl disappears from her husband's house, with no excuse other than the fact that he happens to be a person with a rather strong personality and an unconscious habit of having his own way in everything, it may be considered out of the ordinary. It was not that he was not a fine and devoted man, or that his way was not generally the right way; it was just his monotonous habit of stubbornly dominating those about him. The girl who ran away from him was Melanie Gault, the central figure in Grace Margaret Gallaher's short novellette—or long short story, as you prefer it—which appears in the next issue of SMITH'S. Melanie was brought up in a Connecticut village, among old-fashioned people. She had a genuine "New England conscience." She really cared for her husband, and had no advanced ideas on the divorce question; but she just had to get away for a breath of freedom. The only thing she knew how to do was to keep house, and so she answered the advertisement of an old

man who wanted a housekeeper. She got the position, and later on she got her husband again. They both had learned something in the meantime. It is a story you will enjoy reading.

OF course, by this time you are seriously interested in the welfare of the Cochran children, of whom Marion Short has told us in other issues of the magazine. In the next number is another story about them, "An Impromptu Recital," which we ourselves think is the best in the series so far. There is another story by Holman F. Day in next month's SMITH'S, and of course it concerns our old friend Cap'n Sproul. This story is perhaps not quite so funny as some of the adventures the cap'n has had in the past, but it's a splendid story. It has a more serious plot than some of them, and still enough humor to let you know that Holman Day wrote the tale.

WE are sure you are going to like "The Joy Bringers," by Grace MacGowan Cooke, which starts in the present number. There's another big installment next month. There is also a splendid collection of short stories by such authors as Jean Carmichael, Anne O'Hagan, Edwin L. Sabin, Hulbert Footner, Anne Shannon Monroe, and Frank X. Finnegan.

IN closing we would like to call attention to the fact that those who expect to receive advice from Doctor Lillian Whitney in answer to their letters must inclose return postage. We receive addressed to her in our care a good many letters from Canada. Canadian stamps are worthless in the United States. Those living in Canada should inclose United States stamps if they expect an answer.





# Body Building

By Doctor Lillian Whitney

IT is the ambition of every little boy to grow into a big man, and every little girl to become a beautiful woman. As maturity is reached every intelligent boy and girl realizes that there are more attractive things than conspicuous size and mere prettiness. An appreciation of the body, and of the immortal soul that dwells within, impresses itself upon us as we leave childhood and reach the years of self-consciousness. We now begin to feel a righteous pride in this body that clothes our soul; and if we treat it with a high regard for its uniform development, a symmetrical growth of all parts will result in a physical being so constituted as to prove "a thing of beauty and a joy forever," because a symmetrically developed, well-trained body performs the commands of the mind with the least possible strain or friction—a superb machine, with a steady hand at the helm.

This perfect command of the mental over the physical enables us to live to the best and highest that is in us; but, unfortunately to a great many, the true value of a sound mind in a sound body is not realized until later in life, when all sorts of physical imperfections begin to manifest themselves as a result of the improper use of the body. Only recently the medical profession seems to have fully awakened to the truth that many cases of chronic invalidism are directly traceable to over and under-development of the body.

From the standpoint of beauty, these conditions may justly be termed minor deformities. Take, for instance, the spine. In how many human beings is this wonderfully constructed, bony column developed to its highest state of efficiency? Slouching attitudes cause slight curvatures of varying kind that are noticeable to a practiced eye in the downward droop of one shoulder—this is not attributed to the spine, but to the

shoulder itself; in a rounding of the ribs behind and flattening in front, resulting in that very common deformity—flat chest and round shoulders; or to that condition known as pigeon chest, in which, from spinal distortion, the breastbone is projected forward.

However slight the imperfection of the spinal column may be, it is out of plumb; its beauty is marred, and all the organs in the trunk are more or less hampered in their activities because their relative positions have been more or less interfered with. In architecture, the perfect column—the line and the curve—is regarded as the most admirable. So it is with the human frame; the fundamental structure is a perfectly formed spine, as strong and as pliant as well-tempered steel.

A perfect back is straight and flat; it is also wonderfully expressive. While each nation has its characteristic back, they all unite in expressing poise, grace, dignity, and intelligence. The back of the Venus De Milo, marvelously shaped, is heavier than our standard of to-day. The back must be properly proportioned to the size of the body, with the shoulders slightly wider than the hips. In this respect we also differ from the ancient Romans and the Greeks, who admired breadth, width. However, a perfect model for the male of to-day who desires to mold his form in classic lines is the study of the Winged Mercury; but we have grown so far away from Greek ideals of female beauty that, were a statue of Venus or Aphrodite to glow with life, we would admire the wonderful outline of form and face, but would be repelled by the cold, selfish, and heartless character it presented. The effect produced would be similar to that of Tennyson's Maud.

Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,  
Dead perfection, no more.

In what sharp contrast to these cold, classic figures is MacMonnies' exquisite Bacchante! She is modern, and expresses by her marvelous pose the present-day impulse pervading every department of thought, be it in religion, science, or philosophy; namely, the impulse to live every moment of this life to the best and the highest that is in us. She represents the joy of life; the joy of youth; the joy of laughter; the joy of the curved line.

MacMonnies' Bacchante points a tremendous lesson to the American woman. It teaches her first that the study of personal beauty has for its foundation a thorough acquaintance with the female form, a love and reverence for that which is purely her own, a desire to make it fall into beautiful lines and curves by acquiring grace, poise, and lightness through the joy of life.

This digression into the realm of art has not taken us away from the subject in hand—a perfect back. Study the Winged Mercury, study the Bacchante, and it will be found that the exquisitely molded superstructure depends upon the foundation column.

The positions assumed in walking, standing, and sitting all tend to improve or injure the back. When lounging is



The Bacchante, by MacMonnies.

habitually indulged in, or the weight of the body constantly thrown on one set of muscles, it tends to their overdevelopment, while those that remain idle become weakened, and in time are unable to perform their work. Concentration of the mind upon this fact will induce one to assume the erect position; constant thought becomes "second nature," and, after a while, the straight column, with its perfect line and curve, becomes part of oneself.

Slight deformities of the back can be corrected in time by daily practicing the following little exercise: Plant the feet firmly on the floor, draw the body up to its full height, throw the arms out above the head, and, without moving the feet, strive to reach an imaginary object suspended from the ceiling. This disjoints, as it were, the bones of the spinal column—there are twenty-four—puts the ligaments and muscles on the stretch, lim-

bers up and renders supple those bundles of muscles on each side of the lumbar region called the "erector spinal mass."

Underdevelopment of the bony framework itself may be corrected in early life by feeding the osseous system with lime and calcium salts; but after full maturity has been reached, the best

we can do is to develop the muscular system in proportion with the bony one. Symmetry of form is only possible when these two systems are in complete harmony with each other. If one set of muscles, or, to speak more plainly, if one hip is larger than the other, special exercises with the underdeveloped side must be performed until it compares favorably with its mate. If the lower part of the body is well proportioned and the arms and chest are thin, breathing exercises that expand the lungs and develop the muscles of the thorax and arms will soon bring about a delightful change.

Overdevelopment, especially of fat, through the hips and abdomen, must be rigidly guarded against. To the critical eye of an artist, an ounce of superfluous flesh is a positive deformity. The large abdomen seen so commonly in men and women at middle life means that the center of gravity is changed, and the only way in which an easy position can be maintained is to throw the body backward at the top. This necessarily results in straining the ligaments of the back and neck. A distressingly ugly hollow at the small of the back invariably follows. A good deal of work is needed to correct this condition. In addition to daily gymnastics, an abdominal support, made to individual measure, has been found most helpful in reducing these parts to their normal size.

Those who are poorly built, or who, from some physical weakness, are unable to develop, are probably suffering from some disorder of the blood-making organs; because pure blood is, after all, the foundation of health and beauty, and all our efforts at physical improvement have this fact in mind; to promote the purity and richness of the blood. Mention has been

made in previous articles of a remarkable product which is a blood maker and tissue builder. The name and further information concerning this preparation, and its great value in connection with our subject, will gladly be furnished to any one on inquiry..

The question of physical culture necessarily comes up in discussing body building. It must be remembered that no amount of indoor exercise can ever replace the common, healthful outdoor sports such as walking, swimming, golf, croquet, field hockey, and tennis. Especially at this time of the year, when it is possible to enjoy these games until late in the evening, are they particularly recommended for their value in promoting health and in developing physical beauty.

Tennis is valuable alike for those of too ample and too meager proportions. The frequent jumping and stretching to reach balls reduces the abdomen, and gives grace and suppleness to the waist and back, besides developing the muscles of the chest and neck. It is especially good practice for the right side if it is underdeveloped; and, where this is not the case, both hands should be employed in playing the game; otherwise it is bound to increase the side most used.

The following course in home gymnastics is given with a view of meeting every need in building up, or in breaking down, those parts of the body that require either process. Bear in mind the necessity for dressing loosely and filling the lungs with fresh air.

#### SIMPLE EXERCISES THAT PROMOTE BEAUTY OF FORM.

Breathing exercises should be performed before breakfast in a room in which the air is fresh, or before an open



Bend until the hand touches the floor. A difficult, but splendid body exercise.

window. The hands should be raised slowly until they extend straight above the head. The two thumbs should then be locked. While being raised, the lungs should be filled slowly with air, so that by the time the hands are fully raised the lungs will be expanded to their full capacity. Holding the breath in the lungs, the arms, kept stiff and straight, should then be lowered slowly toward the feet, and should be forced down as near the feet as possible. This will curve the back and give the body an appearance of an inverted U. When the arms can reach no farther, the air in the lungs should be slowly expelled. Then, after a second's pause, the hands should be raised slowly again, and the exercise repeated as before. This may be repeated ten or twenty times, with an interval of rest when fatigued.

The refreshing effect of this exercise will be felt throughout the day. The body will feel more alive than it has done for years probably. Besides the immediate effect of oxygenating the blood, the liver will have undergone a natural massage by pressure between the diaphragm and intestines—a very important and useful result—and the muscles of the back and chest will have developed from *within outwardly*. Mere muscular exercises to "expand the chest," without regard to proper breathing, are likely to do more harm than good. They tighten and harden the muscles, converting them into so many bands of iron to confine the chest and lungs. Develop the lung capacity, and the rest will follow naturally. Hard muscles are a proof neither of strength nor of health, in spite of the common superstition to the contrary.

The following indoor exercises are possible to those confined to the house by chronic ill health, or those busy wage-



Describe a circle from the waist line.

earners who have but a minimum of time to devote to personal hygiene.

It should always be remembered that the true object of exercise is not that of hardening the muscles, but of giving every tissue in the body the opportunity to *breathe*. A man may have immense biceps, and yet be thoroughly lacking in muscular tone. Every other tissue in the body may be choked with poisonous waste products.

It is best to combine certain muscular and joint exercise with the breathing exercises already given.

The first essential is to learn to stand properly with the head erect and the shoulders flat—not pressed backward. Now raise the heels slowly, pressing the ground with the toes. Repeat this ten times. Now hold the arms flat against the sides, bend the knees, and lower the body toward the heels without actually touching them; raise the body again, keeping the back straight and upward, and not allowing the hands to touch the floor.

Next: Hold the hands one on each side of the waist, keeping the shoulders as flat and stiff as possible, and the legs stiff and straight; bend the upper part of the body far to one side, and then at that angle move it around in a circle, the center of which will be the waist.

The effect is to move the body from the hips in the direction of flexion, extension, and rotation; the circular movement being particularly beneficial to the abdominal muscles and organs. It increases the flow of blood to the entire digestive tract.

Next: Bend the body at right angles to the legs, and keep in this position throughout the exercise. Bend the right knee, and touch the floor, or as near it as possible, with the right hand, at the same time carrying the left arm upward and forward above the head. Then, as

the knee is straightened and the right hand is carried above the head, the left knee and hand assume the position that the right one previously occupied. In changing from one side to the other do not elevate the body. This is a fine, all-round exercise, and is specially valuable in cases of constipation, hepatic torpor, weak back, contracted chest, and round or drooping shoulders.

To increase the breadth of the shoulder measurement, to strengthen the lungs, and, by the way, to markedly increase the bust and bury the collar bone, stand upright, with head erect in such a way that one arm extended so as to be parallel with the floor will just touch the wall. Having assumed this position, move the feet an inch at a time away from the wall, and, while keeping the legs and lower spine erect, stretch the arm and shoulder so as to keep the tips of the fingers continually in touch with the wall. Repeat these movements with the other arm.

To develop the neck, to give the head a graceful poise, to exercise the great arteries and veins that pass through the neck, and to give tone to the bronchial



Endeavor to touch an imaginary object beyond reach.

tubes: Hold the body from the shoulders down stiff and straight, unhinge the head, as it were, and turn it slowly from side to side, a circular or rotary movement. Repeat ten times. Then move it forward upon the chest, backward upon the spine, and laterally upon the shoulders. Repeat in each direction ten times.

Finally: Lie flat on the floor, with the arms extended straight on either side of the body without their touching the floor. Then slowly raise the body until the sitting position is attained. Recline once more, and repeat the movement. When this exercise becomes easy, place the hands on the back of the head and raise the upper part of the body as before.

Both these simple exercises have a marvelous effect upon the abdominal and hip muscles. The digestive organs will be wonderfully benefited and the general health astonishingly improved—to say nothing of the change which will, in time, take place in one's whole appearance.

*Note: Correct measurements of the human form will be sent to any one desiring this information.*

## Answers to Correspondents

MARY.—Yes, Vaucaire Tonic is a general developer, so also is Irontronon, although the latter is a *blood* builder particularly, and increases weight by establishing health. If you want purely local measures for developing the bust, proceed as follows:

Cocoa butter.....2 ounces  
Lanolin.....2 ounces  
Oil of sweet almonds.....2 ounces

Melt the first two in a double boiler, remove from the fire, stir in the oil, and beat until cool. At night bathe the bust with warm water, and massage gently with the cream in circular movements around the breasts. In the morning bathe the parts in

very cold water, douching with a heavy sponge or with a sprinkler attached to the cold-water faucet. Follow this with deep breathing before an open window.

JOHNNIE.—In most cases of chronic skin trouble bathing affords much relief. Vapor baths, either plain or medicated, soften the skin, relieve itching, and are of great assistance to other remedies employed. So is also the judicious use of medicated soaps. Tar is one of the best applications for any chronic form of this trouble, either a fine tar soap or the more elegant preparations of tar oils in ointments. The constant use of bicarbonate of soda in your bath water will be of great help, too.

Dr. Whitney will be glad to answer, free of charge, all reasonable questions relating to beauty and health. Private replies will be sent to those enclosing a self-addressed stamped envelope. Address: Beauty Department, SMITH'S MAGAZINE, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York.

# "There is Beauty in Every Jar"

TAKE Milkweed Cream on your summer outings. It gives the skin softness, whitens it and increases its resisting power, making the face less susceptible to changes in weather.

## Ingram's Milkweed Cream

Apply Milkweed Cream *gently*—without rubbing—twice a day. It gives your skin power to resist flabbiness, and the lines of time. It protects against rough winds, redness, freckles and sunburn. Price, 50 cents and \$1.00.

**Preserves Good Complexions—  
Improves Bad Complexions**

### A PERSONAL TEST:

Let us prove to you the value of Ingram's Toilet Specialties. Write us the name and address of your druggist, and we will send you, FREE, through him, a box of assorted samples of our toilet essentials. Or, enclose ten cents, and we will mail the samples, direct to you. Address

FREDERICK F. INGRAM, President

**FREDERICK F. INGRAM COMPANY**

68 Tenth St., Detroit, Michigan, U. S. A.

Windsor, Ontario



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XU



**Soda crackers are more nutritive than any other flour food. Uneeda Biscuit are the perfect soda crackers. Therefore, Uneeda Biscuit.**

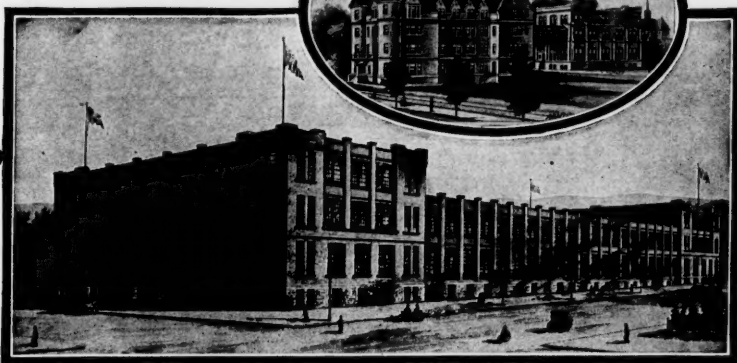
**Though the cost is but five cents, Uneeda Biscuit are too good, too nourishing, too crisp, to be bought merely as an economy.**

**Buy them because of their freshness—buy them because of their crispness—buy them because of their goodness—buy them because of their nourishment.**

**Always 5 cents. Always fresh and crisp.**

**NATIONAL BISCUIT  
COMPANY**

ADMINISTRATION AND INSTRUCTION  
BUILDINGS  
OCCUPIED ENTIRELY BY THE I. C. S.



## The Business of This Place is to Raise Salaries

That sounds queer, doesn't it? And yet there is such a place in reality—*The International Correspondence Schools*, of Scranton, Pa., an institution the entire business of which is to raise not merely salaries—but *your salary*.

To achieve that purpose the I. C. S. has a working capital of many millions of dollars, owns and occupies three large buildings, covering seven acres of floor space, and employs 3000 trained people, all of whom have one object in view—to make it easy for you and all poorly-paid men to earn more. Truly then—the *business of this place is to raise salaries*.

Every month an average of 400 I. C. S. students *voluntarily* report increased salaries. In 1911 over 5000 students so reported. These students live in every section. Right in their own homes, at their present work, the I. C. S. *goes to them*, trains them to advance in their chosen line, or to profitably change to a more congenial occupation.

*The same opportunity now knocks at your door. What are you going to do with it?* Are you going to lock the door in its face and lag along at the same old wages, or are you going to open the door and give the I. C. S. a chance to show you? Perhaps you don't see how, but the I. C. S. does. That is its business—to *raise your salary*.

*Here is all you have to do.* From the list in the attached coupon select the position you prefer, and mark and mail the coupon today. It costs you nothing but the stamp to learn how the I. C. S. can raise *your* salary.

### INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

Box 898 SCRANTON, PA.

Explain, without further obligation on my part, how I can qualify for the position before which I mark X.

Electrical Engineer  
Elec. Lighting Supt.  
Electric Car Running  
Electric Wireman  
Telephone Expert  
Architect  
Building Contractor  
Architectural Draftsman  
Structural Engineer  
Concrete Construction  
Mechan. Engineer  
Mechanical Draftsman  
Refrigeration Engineer  
Civil Engineer  
Surveyor  
Mine Superintendent  
Metal Mining  
Locomotive Fireman & Eng.  
Stationary Engineer  
Textile Manufacturing  
Gas Engines  
Automobile Running

Civil Service  
Railway Mail Clerk  
Bookkeeping  
Stenography & Typewriting  
Window Trimming  
Show Card Writing  
Lettering & Sign Painting  
Advertising  
Salesmanship  
Commercial Illustrating  
Industrial Designing  
Commercial Law  
Teacher  
English Branches  
Good English for Every One  
Agriculture  
Poultry Farming  
Plumbing & Steam Fitting  
Sheet Metal Worker  
Navigation Spanish  
Languages French  
Chemist German

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Present Occupation \_\_\_\_\_  
Street and No. \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

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"THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS"

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¶ AINSLEE'S has built its reputation as the ideal magazine of entertainment for cultured American readers upon the best fiction obtainable, irrespective of authors' fame or previous achievements.

¶ That it is the story rather than the name that counts with AINSLEE'S is shown by the fact that this was the first magazine in this country to recognize the merit of O. Henry, Jeffery Farnol, Joseph C. Lincoln, William J. Locke, H. F. Prevost Battersby and others who have since acquired fame. The great writers of to-morrow are appearing in AINSLEE'S to-day.

¶ The standard of AINSLEE'S is at least as high as that of the best magazine. The price is as low as that of the ordinary magazine.

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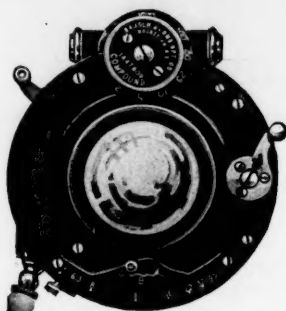
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Fifteen cents the copy

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## The SPECIAL KODAKS

They take what you want  
when you want it.

Snap-Shots on cloudy days, snap-shots in light shade—even in-door snap-shots when conditions are right—all these are easily possible with the *Special* Kodaks.

They are pocket cameras, so light that you carry them where you will; they are *Kodaks*, so simple that you readily learn to use them; they are capable instruments, so efficient that they take what you want, when you want it.

IN DETAIL:—Zeiss *Kodak* Anastigmat lenses; speed *f.* 6.3. Compound shutters, with variable indicated speeds—from 1 second to  $\frac{1}{100}$  of a second on the No. 3A and to  $\frac{1}{250}$  of a second on the Nos. 3 and 1A. Also time and "bulb" exposures. Rising and sliding fronts, rack and pinion for focusing, revolvers holding two loaded sockets. Load in daylight with Kodak film cartridges. Made of aluminum covered with finest Persian morocco. Black leather bellows, heavily nickeled fittings. Correct in design and accurate in every detail of construction.

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| No. 1A | Special Kodak, for pictures, | - - - | 2½ x 4¼ inches, | \$50.00 |
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EASTMAN KODAK COMPANY,

*Kodak catalogue free at the  
dealers or by mail.*

ROCHESTER, N. Y., *The Kodak City.*

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# The Wizard Who Ends All Corns

Some years ago a chemist invented the now famous B & B wax.

To apply it we invented the Blue-jay plaster.

Since then, fifty million corns have been ended forever by this little application.

It is applied in a jiffy. The pain instantly ends. Then the B & B wax gently loosens the corn. In two

days the whole corn, root and all, comes out.

No soreness, no discomfort. You simply forget the corn.

Why pare corns when this thing is possible?

Paring simply removes the top layers. It is exceedingly dangerous, for a slip of the blade may mean infection.

Why trifle with corns—treat them over and over—when a Blue-jay removes them completely, and in 48 hours. Prove it today.



A In the picture is the soft B & B wax. It loosens the corn.  
B protects the corn, stopping the pain at once.  
C wraps around the toe. It is narrowed to be comfortable.  
D is rubber adhesive to fasten the plaster on.

## Blue-jay Corn Plasters

Sold by Druggists—15c and 25c per package

Sample Mailed Free. Also Blue-jay Bunion Plasters

(157)

Bauer & Black, Chicago and New York, Makers of B & B Handy Package Absorbent Cotton, etc.



YOU CAN MAKE CIGARETTES LIKE THESE

A Practical Novelty for Cigarette Smokers

**TURKO CIGARETTE ROLLER**

Sent postpaid for 25cts. Address,

Turko Roller Co., 135 William St., New York

## \$82 Saving on New Typewriter

As a result of remarkable invention, a modern, standard keyboard typewriter is now being built, in the Elliott-Fisher Billing Machine factory, with only 250 parts. Other machines have 1700 to 3700. This typewriter—**THE BENNETT PORTABLE**—weighs but 26 lbs., and can be readily carried in grip or pocket. Its wonderful simplicity enables us to sell it for \$18. Sold on money-back-unless-satisfied guaranty. Over 24,000 in daily use. WRITE FOR CATALOG and agents terms. In U.S.A. **\$18**  
**W.R. BENNETT TYPEWRITER CO., 366 Broadway, N. Y.**

## Detroit Marine Engine

Guaranteed

Five Years

You are the sole judge of these—engine and its merits. 25,000 satisfied users. Greatest Engine Bargain ever offered. Nothing complicated or liable to get out of order. Waterproof ignition system. Money refunded if you are not satisfied.

Only 3 Moving Parts.

Starts without cranking. Runs while in motion.



Demonstrator Agents wanted in every boating community. Special wholesale price on the first outfit sold. Single cyl., 2-8 h. p.; double cyl., 5-20 h. p.; 4 cyl., 20-50 h. p. Suitable for any boat, canoe or cruiser. Also railroad track car. All engines complete with boat fittings. Free Catalog.

Detroit Engine Works, 1204 Jefferson Ave., Detroit, Mich.

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It represents card perfection, card economy, progressiveness; carried in book form, cards are detached as used; all edges smooth, every card perfect. Write today.

**THE JOHN B. WIGGINS CO., 63-65 East Adams Street, Chicago**  
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"SMITH'S is an interesting volume, bringing together the work of a company of clever writers.—*Toledo Blade*."

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If you are in the market for a watch, write for our watch catalog. Let us show you how we can save you big money on the World-Famous Illinois Watch and give you a year to pay for it. You have always heard about the Illinois Watch, the kind that most railroad men use. We have just made a special deal which enables us to offer extraordinary low prices.

Write for Our Big  
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Today,  
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**Prices From \$9.75 Up**

Three cents a day will pay for all the most Illinois Watch in our catalog, and besides, our prices are so low that everyone can now afford to own one of these grand watches. Get our Big Watch Catalog today. We will send any watch you want on approval, no obligation to buy. If you like it, we will give you a year to pay for it. Write a postal card today and say, "Send me your Free Watch Catalog."

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## RANGER BICYCLES

Have imported roller chains, sprockets and pedals; New Departure Coaster-Brakes and Hubs; Puncture Proof Tires; Highest grade equipment and many advanced features possessed by no other wheels. *Guaranteed 5 yrs.*

**FACTORY PRICES** direct to you are less than wheels. Other reliable models from \$18 up. A few good second-hand machines \$3 to \$8.

**10 DAYS' FREE TRIAL** We ship on approval, freight prepaid, anywhere in U.S. without a cent in advance.

**DO NOT BUY** a bicycle or a pair of tires from anyone at any price until you get our big new catalog and special prices and a marvelous new offer. A postal brings everything. Write to now. **TIRES, Coaster-Brake Rear Wheels, lamps, parts, sundries, 1/2 usual price.**

Rider! A great everywhere are coming money saving our bicycles, tires and sundries. Write today.

**MEAD CYCLE CO., Dept. H-110 CHICAGO**

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lies in your looks. Your gray, streaked and faded hair is the greatest telltale of advancing age. If you want to look youthful and improve your appearance, write for our book telling about "The Ideal" Comb, the new and wonderful invention of Prof. Heller, the well-known dermatologist of Berlin. This comb restores your hair to its natural color and youthful appearance by simply combing with it. The process is so simple and results so perfect that it may truly be called one of the greatest inventions of the Century. Write for this free book now before you forget.

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**ANNA AYERS, Dept. 4552, 22 Quincy St., Chicago**



## Discouraged About Your Complexion?

Cosmetics only make it worse and do not hide the pimples, freckles, black-heads or red spots on face or nose.

**Dr. James P. Campbell's Safe Arsenic Complexion Wafers** will purify your blood, cleanse and beautify the skin, and give you a fresh and spotless complexion.

Use these absolutely safe and harmless wafers for 30 days and then let your mirror praise the most wonderful beautifier of the complexion and figure known to the medical profession. Used by Beautiful Women for 27 years.

**\$1.00 per Box. (Full 30 day treatment.)**

We guarantee you freshly packed and of full strength, only when boxes have Blue Wrapper, bearing our printed guarantee. Sold by all reliable druggists or sent by mail prepaid in plain cover from **RICHARD FINK CO., Dept. 54, 415 Broadway, New York City**

Write for free booklet and testimonials to-day.

# FOR BABY'S FIRST BATH



Use

# CUTICURA SOAP

Because of its extreme purity, delicate emollient properties and refreshing fragrance, it is unrivaled for baby's tender skin. It costs but little more than ordinary soaps, wears to a wafer and gives comfort and satisfaction every moment of its use for toilet, bath and nursery. Should be used from the hour of birth.



Cuticura Soap and Ointment are sold everywhere. For sample of each, with 32-p. book, free, address "Cuticura," Dept. 123, Boston.

## TENDER-FACED MEN

Should shave with Cuticura Soap Shaving Stick, 25c. Makes shaving a pleasure instead of a torture. Liberal sample free.

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# The Treasure Vault

By ARTHUR B. REEVE

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A long complete novel in the FIRST JULY  
number of *The Popular Magazine*.

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An amazing and exciting detective story of a new kind. Craig Kennedy, the most modern and scientific of detectives, is asked to solve a strange problem. How he goes about it makes a fascinating novel.

***Other big stories by well-known authors***

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### HOME COMFORTS WITHOUT EXTRAVAGANCE

This famous hotel has been renovated, redecorated, refurnished, and many modern, up to date appointments have been installed, and can be compared favorably with any in the city.

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Substitutes  
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showing wonderful White Valley Gems in Rings (Ladies' or Gentlemen's), Scarf Pins, Studs, Brooches, Necklaces, Cuff Buttons, Lockets, Earrings—100 different articles and styles.

Not glass, not paste, not any kind of imitation, but *beautiful, splendid gems*. (White Sapphires chemically produced.)

Look like finest diamonds. Will scratch file, and cut glass. Stand acid test. Famous society women substitute White Valley Gems for real diamonds—or wear the two together confidently.

It is *solid gold* mountings. 25-year Warranty Certificate with each gem. Ring measurement with catalog. Will send any article in book C. O. D.—express prepaid—subject to examination—or by registered mail on receipt of price. Money refunded if not satisfactory.

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a complete novel of real distinction by NALBRO BARTLEY, contains a dozen unusually good short stories by such authors as Marie Van Vorst, Herman Whitaker, Margaretta Tuttle, Samuel Gordon, Anna Alice Chapin and Edgar Saltus.

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Over 400  
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**AMERICAN**

in the World.  
1,210,000  
TONS

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on the palatial  
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**Cleveland**

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From New York November 9, 1912

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**110 Days \$650 and up**

Including all necessary expenses  
aboard and ashore, railway, hotel,  
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Write for beautifully illustrated booklet  
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**During June, July and August**

Duration from 14 to 16 days. Cost  
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By the Popular

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OF OUR ATLAS SERVICE**

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## Beautify Your Hair WITH WALNUT TINT HAIR STAIN

**Light Spots, Gray or Streaked  
Hair Quickly Stained to a  
Beautiful Brown.**



**Trial Bottle Sent Upon Request.**

Nothing gives a woman the  
appearance of age more surely  
than gray, streaked or faded  
hair. Just a touch now and  
then with Mrs. Potter's Wal-  
nut-Tint Hair Stain and  
presto! Youth has returned  
again.

No one would ever suspect  
that you stained your hair  
after you use this splendid  
preparation. It does not rub  
off as dyes do, and leaves the  
hair nice and fluffy, with a  
beautiful brown color.

It only takes you a few min-  
utes once a month to apply  
Mrs. Potter's Walnut-Tint  
Hair Stain with your comb.  
Stains only the hair, is easily  
and quickly applied, and it is  
free from lead, sulphur, silver  
and all metallic compounds.  
Has no odor, no sediment, no  
grease. One bottle of Mrs. Pot-  
ter's Walnut-Tint Hair Stain should  
last you a year. Sells for \$1.00 per  
bottle at first-class druggists. We  
guarantee satisfaction. Send your name and address,  
and enclose 25 cents (stamps or coin) and we will mail  
you, charges prepaid, a trial package, in plain, sealed  
wrapper, with valuable booklet on hair. Mrs. Potter's  
Hygienic Supply Co., 1583 Groton Bldg., Cincinnati, O.

## GENUINE PERFECT CUT DIAMONDS

Buy your diamond direct  
from the Importer at  
the following prices:

1-8 carat, \$ 8.25  
1-4 carat, 17.50  
1-2 carat, 45.00  
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**66 to 97.50 PER CARAT**

1 carat and over,  
\$97.50 per carat

This Solitaire  
and Engagement  
Ring, 14k solid gold,  
\$3.75 extra. Add to  
price of any diamond.  
Shipped at our expense  
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We Guarantee  
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Send no money, no references. Any dia-  
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perfect safety at  
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## Do You Want a Good Position as a Traveling Salesman or Saleswoman

**Where You Can Earn From \$1000  
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We will teach you to be an expert  
Salesman or Saleswoman by mail in six  
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position where you can earn good wages  
while you learn **Practical Salesmanship**.  
If you want to enter the best paid, most in-  
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Address our nearest office. Dept 107  
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GENUINE  
DIAMONDS**  
MODERATE PRICES  
EASY  
TERMS

Get that Diamond for your wife, sweetheart or yourself now—at these startlingly low prices—and pay for it in easy little amounts from time to time.

**Certified Guarantee with every Diamond**—guaranteeing its weight and quality. A safe way to buy and save money—no inconvenience—and have the Diamond now.

Perfectly cut blue white Diamonds, gleaming, sparkling, scintillating—genuine high quality. **Not a cent to pay until you have examined the Diamond.** We send you free magnifying glass. Any diamond in our

**Beautifully Illustrated Diamond and Watch Free Catalog** will be sent for examination without obligation. This offer is open to every honest person—OPEN TO YOU. Note the wonderful values shown here—No. 105—3.8 carat; No. 106—5.8 kt.; No. 107—4.1, 1.18 kt.; No. 108—1.4 kt.; No. 109—1.4 kt.; No. 110—1.4 kt. each; No. 111—3.5, 1.18 kt. Compare these prices with others. Remember we give you CERTIFIED GUARANTEE. We import the rough Diamonds, cut them here, save 32 per cent duty. Give the saving to you.

Write today for our BIG CATALOG and SPECIAL WORLD-BEATING OFFER of 1 carat Diamonds for only \$100. All Diamonds on easy terms—no money first. Send for Catalog today.

**The Walker Edmund Co.,**  
DIAMOND IMPORTERS  
Dept. 5,  
205 S. State St.,  
Chicago  
Illinois

109 \$65  
\$50  
108  
105 \$40  
\$35  
107  
110 \$50  
106 \$35  
\$50  
112

**BARODA** Flash Like Genuine  
**DIAMONDS.**  
ANY STYLE  
at 1/49 the cost—IN SOLID GOLD RINGS

Stand acid test and expert examination. We guarantee them. See them first—then pay.

**Special Offer**—14k Tiffany ring 1 ct. \$5.98. Gents ring 1 ct. \$6.98. 14k Stud 1 ct. \$4.86. Sent C.O.D. for inspection. Catalog FREE. Shows full line. Patent ring gauge included. 10 cents.

**Baroda Co., Dept. 19, Leland & Dover St., Chicago**

**A \$50 Cornet for \$30**

We celebrate our 48th year as the world's largest band instrument house by introducing an American made cornet that challenges the best; beautiful model; easy blowing. Send for our

**Big Band Book FREE!**

and let us give you particulars of our wonderful new values. Monthly payments.

**LYON & HEALY, 27-29 E. Adams St., CHICAGO**

## MULLINS CEDAR CANOES CAN'T SINK

Famous Yale and Harvard models—highest grade materials—finest finish—the strongest canoe built. In each end is a Mullins Buoyancy Pad, which has sufficient buoyancy to float a capsized, water-filled canoe and keep two people afloat. No other canoe on the market has this essential feature.

We also manufacture steel launches, row boats, etc. Write for magnificent catalogue, illustrated in colors—free—postpaid.

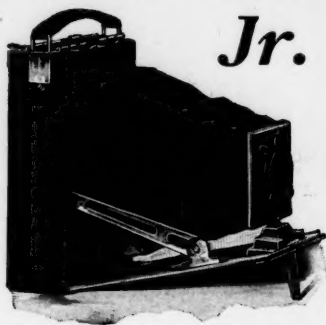
**THE W. H. MULLINS CO.**  
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Then send for the Premo catalogue at once and find out about that new little marvel of compactness, the

## Premoette Jr.



It will make your vacation much more enjoyable.

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And it's so light and compact and easy to carry, so very simple to load and operate that photography is a real pleasure with it.

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Neither the roots nor the branches can live without the other, and if the trunk is girdled so that the sap cannot flow, the whole tree dies.

The existence of the tree depends not only on the activity of all the parts, but upon their being always connected together in the "tree system."

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It is more than the vast machinery of communication, covering the country from ocean to ocean. Every part is alive, and each gives additional usefulness to every other part.

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